

Meta F. Janowitz
Diane Dallal *Editors*

Tales of Gotham, Historical Archaeology, Ethnohistory and Microhistory of New York City

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This book is dedicated to our mothers, Hilda Heines Fayden Runz and Beatrice Lee Pickus Nach.

If we forget about them, we're just a lot of people living in buildings. We need them to tell us who we are. They built this city. They did all the daft human things that turn a lot of buildings into a place for people. It's wrong to throw all that away.

Terry Pratchett, *Johnny and the Dead*

Foreword

City Lives: Archaeological Tales from Gotham

In this volume a group of scholars who have devoted much of their careers to the archaeology of New York City and its greater environs turn their attention to detailed examinations of individual lives and “archaeological biographies” of a wide array of persons who once lived in what is now New York. The authors did not invent these New York stories—they are not fictional or imaginary but grounded in scrupulous, detailed examinations and interpretations of documentary and archaeological evidence.

Archaeologists become entangled with past lives initially through the sites they excavate—selected for excavation not by the archaeologist in pursuit of his or her own research agenda but because of pending destruction through development—and the artifacts they bring back to their labs to analyze and interpret. They become inadvertent biographers of overlooked and little-known people as they delve into documentary and pictorial sources to try to piece together and make vivid the characters who once occupied a given site, and who may have purchased, owned, used, and discarded items of everyday life (see, e.g., Beaudry 2008).

Those who consider archaeology to be a “human science” tend to think that archaeologists should make the results of their work accessible to non-archaeologists. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but one of the most effective means of communicating the results of our work is through writing compelling narratives that go beyond reporting on the technical details of an excavation and of the finds it produces. Historical archaeology is an open-ended, interdisciplinary pursuit that operates outside of the bounds of any single theoretical program and that incorporates bold forays into the worlds of documentary analysis and material culture studies. The purposeful combination of multiple approaches and theoretical perspectives represents a way of experimenting and even playing with archaeological data, much as musicians in creating what falls loosely under the rubric of “world music” practice a kind of “reckless eclecticism” that results in new and engaging

forms of music. Hybridity and eclecticism both in archaeological theory and practice strengthen our field.

We can see eclecticism and creativity in the manifold ways that archaeological storytellers have crafted their “stories.” In the volume “Archaeologists as Storytellers” (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1998), authors employ a variety of techniques to present their data in the form of compelling narratives: letter-writing, diary-keeping, interviews, first-person monologue, boring conference paper interrupted by the irate subject of said paper, oral histories, and fictional vignettes. Contributors to *Tales of Gotham* likewise tell their stories in different ways, though for the most part they muster their data up front and present carefully referenced and annotated stories that can readily be seen as both factual and plausible.

Critics of archaeological storytelling express concern that researchers just make up stories and that this is irresponsible because there is no formal method that underlies the construction of alternative narratives of the past, fictional or otherwise. Underlying this critique is the general sense of uneasiness many archaeologists have about the post-processualist flirtation with deconstructionism, which spawned a brief flurry of works that insisted that there are so many possible readings of a text, an event, or any sort of evidence that there was no hope of ever arriving at the sort of consensus around meaning so fervently wished for by archaeologists trained in normal science. Both the excesses of deconstructionism and of what Bruce Trigger (1988:402) referred to as hyper-relativism in archaeology have been largely discredited and abandoned, but deconstructionism as developed by the French philosopher Derrida (1978) nevertheless left a lasting imprint on postmodern thinking by making us aware that texts are subject to multiple interpretations and that meaning is both context-driven and fluid. Interpretive archaeologists hence are interested in *meanings* in the plural. Our understanding of events in the past changes along with our points of vantage and ways of communicating about events, and explanations of the whys and wherefores of what went on in the past are successive rather than fixed.

Rosemary Joyce in *The Languages of Archaeology* writes “that archaeological writing is storytelling is a commonplace observance by now, although it continues to be resisted . . . even archaeologists most sympathetic to this point have for the most part overlooked the storytelling that is purely internal to our discipline and that precedes the formalization of stories in lectures, books, museum exhibitions, videos, or electronic media.” Joyce notes that our archaeological productions are not and can never be merely transcriptions of what is in the ground; all forms of archaeological transcription involve negotiation of meaning, a “re-presentation of some things in the present as traces of other things in the past” (Joyce 2002: 4–5). In other words, all archaeology is storytelling; all archaeological narratives are constructed. The narratives we produce as well as those we receive vary according to who is negotiating meaning, with whom, and under what circumstances.

Experimental and alternative narrative in archaeology can involve construction of fictional accounts. I have myself indulged in the production of just such a fiction, albeit a fiction that was scrupulously based on what we might think of as facts: data drawn from the archaeological record, documentary evidence, everything I could bring to bear both as direct and indirect evidence to tether my fictional narrative as

closely to, if not truth, and then evidence as I interpreted it (Beaudry 1998). Producing that fictional narrative was one of the most difficult writing tasks I have undertaken because I felt I had to cleave closely to the evidence and “get everything right,” as it were, so that the narrative would be credible and seamless. I could not allow myself all the may-have-beens, might bes, perhapses, and on the other hands with which I normally qualify the interpretations offered in technical reports. In truth, I felt more constrained by the fictional armature than I am by the far less compelling genre of report writing. As Charles Cheek notes in reflecting on his constructed “story” about Wiert Valentine, “I have had to take liberties with interpretations that made sense to me, but may have been interpreted differently by another author.” Archaeological storytellers are often so concerned that their narratives are plausible that they forget that our colleagues could just as easily find fault with our conclusions based on straightforward (unimaginative?) archaeological reportage.

Not all archaeological storytellers elect to construct fictional narratives; Mary and Adrian Praetzellis, in 1989, proposed an approach they referred to as “archaeological biography” as a means of providing vivid portraits of women through the combined contextual interpretation of painstakingly accumulated archaeological and documentary evidence. Rebecca Yamin, whose archaeological tales of the Five Points neighborhood of New York City were singled out for praise by urban historian Alan Mayne (2008), makes the point that “Alternative narratives do not write themselves, even from very good data” (Yamin 2001:154). If we as historical archaeologists hope to examine our data with fresh eyes and open minds and not take for granted the stories constructed about our sites or the people who lived at them that appear in the imaginative writings of nineteenth-century reformers and muckrakers or of industrial apologists who wrote to justify exploitation of working people like miners or textile workers, or of Colonial Revivalists who sought to glorify early European immigrants to America, we must “employ equal amounts of imagination” (2001:154). Yamin notes that “the interpretative approach to archaeological analysis begins the process, but it may not go far enough to create an alternative narrative, a narrative strong enough to communicate agency in a way that does not seem trivial, or incidental” (Ibid.). Yamin takes inspiration from Carmel Schrire’s work (1996) on a seventeenth-century Dutch outpost in South Africa; Schrire calls for an “act of imagination” to connect the data to real life. As Yamin puts it, narrative in this sense becomes a method of interpretation (2001:163).

The approach is characterized by close readings of data drawn from multiple lines of evidence in combination with informed imagination that situates people within their time. The resulting narratives are grounded in recent historical scholarship and though they might seem to be particularistic, in Yamin’s case they contribute to an ongoing dialogue about the Five Points neighborhood and more broadly about how and why it became “the archetypal slum”—and hence Yamin’s narratives of Five Points originate with a microscopic examination of individuals and how they negotiated meanings in their everyday lives, but in the aggregate the “vignettes” that she produces speak more broadly to issues of how scholars have constructed meanings around stereotypes of Five Points and other so-called slums, and hence in the end the most personal narrative lends itself to a reconsideration of morphological

issues, that is, to critical examination of typological constructions about the past and the present (Magnusson 2003), in this case, around the invention of places called slums, about why we may have needed to invent slums, and about how the morphological class of places labeled slums has been used as a filter or screen to block out our vision of the individuals who lived in such places.

Similarly, Lu Ann De Cunzo in her work in Delaware (2004) constructs a series of alternative narratives about Delaware farms, farmers, farm families, and farm laborers across economic, social, and racial lines. Her detailed historical ethnographies challenge the notion that there is a unitary phenomenon we can call “the culture of agriculture”; rather, De Cunzo reveals that in Delaware, as, presumably, elsewhere in America, there were multiple “cultures” of agriculture. Historical archaeologists can bring to light the many contexts in which people negotiated their lives in the diverse communities of farmers, and it is our job to explode the myth of the American farm as a unitary morphological type.

Because it begins with a focus on the small scale and the everyday, microhistory is often highly biographical in its approach. Microhistorians investigate the intimate details of the lives of their subjects, to the extent that at times they seem to have become enamored of the people who are the actors in their historical dramas and even to identify with them (Lepore 2001). Darnton (2004:61) refers to the basic method microhistorians employ, which he refers to as incident analysis. He notes that most microhistories start with an event and employ something of a detective’s cleverness and insight to expose the underlying meanings of supposedly single events that are actually part of a chain of events situated in a particular historical context that are experienced and recounted by individuals who have differing backgrounds, motivations, and standpoints.

The forensic metaphor is apt for archaeologists; examining an archaeological site and analyzing what it produces often resembles crime scene investigation, because our work often begins with the “scene of the crime” as it were and we have a battery of methods that allow us to understand how our sites were formed and perhaps how things got to be in the ground in just the way we find them, and of course we have the privilege of access to more secrets about people’s lives than historians will find in all the world’s archives. The problem is to take the obvious and the not-so-obvious and situate both in the contexts of the lives of the people whom we are studying and then try to understand what a particular congeries of artifacts and other evidence is telling us about what it all meant to those people. This forces us to construct narratives that do more than just tack back and forth between sources but that weave together the various strands of evidence into strong cables of inference (Wylie 1999).

Microhistory, or microhistorical archaeology, begins with a focus on the small scale and the everyday and, as seen in the chapters in this book, tends to be highly biographical in its approach. Here, “archaeological biographies” provide vivid portraits of women such as Sara Roeloffse (Janowitz), Maria van Cortlandt van Rensselaer and Alida Schuyler van Rensselaer Livingston (Rothschild), and Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler (Geismar). Here the archaeologists’ work with objects and sites leads them to the archives in attempts to elucidate the material lives of the people who lived at

their sites but who did not play a starring role in history as written by historians—but the archaeologists’ work recovers their biographies and, through examining the particularities of a single life, bring us closer to an understanding of the “worlds” these people inhabited; these material histories are one of the chief mechanisms for bringing the lives of women to the forefront, lives that often prove to have been perhaps representative but far from ordinary (cf. Krohn and Miller 2009). We also meet cartman Wiert Valentine (Cheek), Mayor Stephen Allen (Harris); the intimately known but nevertheless still largely anonymous H.W. (Howson); the artisanal Van Voorhis family (Wall); and groups formed from common purpose and commensality (Morgan, Pipes) or through communal interment after a life of hard work and disenfranchisement (LaRoche). All of these stories have been brought to light through the combined contextual interpretation of painstakingly accumulated archaeological and documentary evidence.

A microhistorical, biographical approach affords historical archaeologists an aesthetic apprehension of their subjects’ lives because it allows them to address the experience of the perceiving individual, the collective construction of meaning, and how objects structure experience. An aesthetic or emotional archaeology attends to the production, circulation, consumption, representativeness, and symbolic character of objects and to how recovering the context of an object can change our understanding of the historical moment. Such studies recognize the methodological interdependency of data-, text-, and object-based analyses, acknowledging *intertextuality*—the relationship among the various lines of evidence that inform us about the distant past, the contemporary past, and the present (Beaudry 1995:4).

The tales from Gotham that follow are redolent in atmospherics, presenting the sights, smells, noises, gardens, animals, buildings, and rubbish that characterized New York over time; many of the essays emphasize how former residents of New York experienced life in the city. Cantwell provides insight into New York’s first people, the Munsee, and how their “world”—the landscape and all creatures living in it—began to experience rapid change after first contact with the Dutch. That the Dutch envisioned a very different “place” for dwelling than did the Munsee is made clear by Schaefer in his discussion of how the Dutch construed the natural world in terms of plants in service to people and how plants and medical preparations from them in turn regulated the health and well-being and fashioned the bodies of humans. Experience and movement are recurring themes linking the stories together; food, health, and the body also feature prominently. These in turn are linked to themes around identity, nationalism, and immigration as aspects of both colonial and post-colonial experiences in early America. These archaeological biographies lead us outward towards a wider examination of the social and cultural processes that shaped New York and that are reshaping it today.

These stories of New York and New Yorkers are evocative; their power derives from their focus on the personal and on persons in the contexts of the times and places they inhabited. Traditional archaeological narratives do not bring us into such close contact with past lives. The quantitative analysis of archaeological data, no matter how telling the numbers might be, lacks the power found in these alternative narratives, because the data simply do not speak for themselves. Data may

speak to archaeologists but they will not convince anyone else, because they have no plot and tell no stories; microhistory is written “from a qualitative rather than a quantitative perspective” (Ginsburg 1993:12). Here, the occasional “act of imagination”—born largely out of the intimate familiarity these scholars have with their subjects—connects the data to real life. Arriving at the most plausible of all the possible interpretations is the ultimate aim of archaeological biography. Victor Buchli (2000:11) has argued that it is in the superfluities and pluralities of experience, practice, and interpretation that contemporary historical archaeology finds strength. The diverse essays in this volume are not just plausible but engaging and compelling, rich in intimate and colorful portraits of the people and places of New York.

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Part I
New Amsterdam: Americans
and Europeans

Chapter 1

New Amsterdam: Americans and Europeans, Historical Background

Meta F. Janowitz and Diane Dallal

People first inhabited the area now called New York City sometime before 13,000 years ago. For the years between these earliest inhabitants and the Lenape, the people here when Europeans arrived, archaeological data and stories passed down from ancestors are the evidence about the past. After the arrival of Europeans, written documents, maps, drawings, and paintings are additional pieces of the picture.

Europeans seeking trade goods and a route to Asia might have visited the area as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, but the first recorded European journey to the welcoming harbor around which New York City formed was in 1524 when Giovanni Verrazzano, a Florentine sailing for France, arrived. Throughout the rest of the century there were probably unrecorded trips by explorers and traders from several western European countries. European goods came to the Lenape through these voyages and perhaps indirectly from the French fur trade farther north. No European territorial claims were firmly established, however, until the seventeenth century, after Henry Hudson arrived in 1609.

Hudson, an Englishman, sailed for the Dutch East India Company as part of the quest to find the Northwest Passage to Asia. In lieu of this passage, he found a pleasant land with resources, in particular furs obtained from the Lenape, which could be incorporated into the existing Dutch international trading sphere. After Hudson returned to Europe with his news and cargo, the States General, the governing body of The Netherlands, claimed the area between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers as *Nieuw Nederland*. Representatives from competing groups of Dutch merchants sailed to the area to trade but a permanent settlement was not begun until 1624 under the Dutch West India Company (WIC), a chartered company established in

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1621. Chartered companies were granted monopolies by the governments of their respective countries to trade with certain parts of the world. Members of the WIC were the only Dutch merchants who could trade legally with North and South America and West Africa. Ships of the WIC were also expected to act as privateers (officially sanctioned pirates) against Spanish vessels, capturing their valuable ships and cargoes.

The 19 Directors of the WIC were merchants whose principal concern was not colonization but profit from trading, although they were aware that support services were necessary for the success of their trading venture. These support services included farmers to provide European foods; surgeons; workmen and artisans, such as carpenters, millers, and bakers; a minister; and, later, a midwife. Nevertheless, the principal activity of the colony was the fur trade, and, for over a decade, the fur trade was the exclusive monopoly of the WIC. Government in New Netherland was in the hands of a WIC-appointed Director-General who reported directly to the WIC Directors in Amsterdam and whose decisions had to take into account the entire concerns of the Company, not just one particular settlement.

The first settlers of 1624 were dispersed throughout New Netherland in order to strengthen the WIC's territorial claims. When Peter Minuit became Director-General in 1626 he recognized the hazards of a dispersed population and concentrated the colonists, and some new arrivals, in a settlement at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, named *Nieuw Amsterdam*. New Amsterdam became the administrative and commercial center of New Netherland and the link between the old and New Netherlands.

The colony and the town grew slowly throughout the 1620s and 1630s. The prevailing policies of the WIC did not actively encourage settlement and The Netherlands, because of its prosperous economy and religious toleration, was a desirable place to live. There was little pressure on the Dutch to leave their homeland; other Dutch colonies, especially Indonesia and Brazil with their increased opportunities for profit making, were more appealing. The Netherlands itself, however, attracted immigrants from other European countries and these already transplanted or dispossessed groups were a potential source of colonists for the Americas: almost half of the immigrants to New Netherland were not Dutch but came from neighboring areas of Germany, France, the Southern Netherlands, and Scandinavia (Cohen 1981:60). Once they arrived in the colony, there is little evidence that these immigrants, with the notable exception of Jews (Sephardic Jews, many of whom came to New Amsterdam by way of Brazil) and enslaved Africans, attempted to maintain a separate cultural identity.

The 1640s were a very difficult time because of wars with the Lenape (see Chap. 2). Many Europeans and Native Americans were killed and their settlements and crops destroyed. The situation did not improve until after 1647 when Peter Stuyvesant assumed the post of Director-General. The wars between the Europeans and the Lenape were resolved for the moment and new WIC policies did more to encourage immigration of families. Between 1655 and 1672 texts about New Netherland appeared regularly in Europe, describing it as a land of unlimited potential only needing industrious, enthusiastic settlers to yield up its agricultural

and mercantile treasures. The best known of these, Adrian van der Donck's 1655 *Beschrijvinghe van Nieuw-Nederlandt* (A Description of New Netherland), is an invaluable resource for historians and archaeologists interested in seventeenth-century New York in particular and eastern North America in general.

The rate of population growth, through both immigration and natural population expansion, increased dramatically in the last 7–10 years of New Netherland's existence. The character of the later migration had also changed: percentages of non-Dutch immigrants declined significantly; only one-fourth were single men; and approximately 70% were families, generally young parents with one or two small children (Rink 1986:167–168). Single women appeared among the immigrants, often as family servants. It appears that New Netherland's population problems were starting to be resolved just at the point where colonial development was changed by the English conquest in 1664.

The internal politics of New Amsterdam also changed during the 1650s. The city was granted a municipal charter in 1653 by the States General, taking some governing power away from Director-General Stuyvesant and the WIC and giving it to the citizens themselves. Under the charter, municipal officials responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the city were appointed from among its male inhabitants, initially by Stuyvesant and later by the outgoing officials with his approval. Municipal laws were almost always based upon those of Amsterdam, as frequent references to "according to the laws of Old Amsterdam" in the ordinances show. In 1657, the citizens were granted the burgher right. Holders of the burgher right had the privilege to trade, run businesses, and pursue manufacturing or handicraft occupations. The burgher right had to be purchased by those who came to the city to trade. Anyone who did not have the burgher right could not engage in trade in the city, even if staying in New Amsterdam for only a brief time, a practice based on trade restrictions enacted by medieval European cities to protect local merchants and to collect revenue. Local merchants were thus sheltered from competition by outsiders, and it became good business practice for outside merchants to trade through New Amsterdam merchants rather than directly for themselves, although it was not uncommon for English merchants from Virginia or New England to purchase the New Amsterdam burgher right.

Trade has always been the foundation of life in New York City. The fur trade was the most important factor in the decision to colonize New Netherland. After 1639, as one means of encouraging the colony's growth and prosperity, the WIC opened the trade not only to all inhabitants of New Netherland but also to all citizens of The Netherlands. In addition, private shipping was permitted to go to the settlement, provided it carried a WIC employee as supercargo (an agent in charge of a ship's cargo and its sale and purchase). Trade to New Amsterdam came to be dominated by a small number of Old Amsterdam merchants who controlled up to 50%, and occasionally more, of the trade during the last 20 years of the colony (Rink 1986:175). Trade provided the people of New Amsterdam with the material culture of The Netherlands. Thanks to regular trade, New Netherland in its later years was not a poorly supplied frontier outpost, as were some of the other European colonies, but was rather a reflection, albeit on a smaller scale, of the Netherlands.

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Chapter 2

Penhawitz and Wampage and the Seventeenth-Century World They Dominated

Anne-Marie Cantwell

At the time of the European incursions, what is now New York City was part of a larger Native territory that modern elders call Lenapehoking, land of the people.¹ Its seventeenth-century residents, members of a larger Algonquian group, the Lenape or Delaware, spoke a dialect called Munsee and had social and economic ties with similar-speaking peoples in villages across a territory that stretched from the lower Hudson Valley and western Long Island across northern New Jersey. Although these local peoples, the stewards of the land, are known as Munsee, after their dialect, there was no single Munsee political unit at that time, no tribe, just a number of small independent, loosely organized groups, commonly named after a particular place or a leader of proven ability. Their leaders or sachems led by persuasion and individuals moved freely from one group to another as their circumstances warranted (Cantwell and Wall 2001; Goddard 1978). In the seventeenth century, they were the Americans.²

The stories of these Americans are often ignored today, buried in what is seen by some as the grand story of European colonization or the equally grand one of the rise of New York City as a major world capital. But when the Europeans arrived in the seventeenth century, New York had been Indian country for at least 13,000 years (Cantwell and Wall 2001, 2010). And, during that tumultuous seventeenth century, the

¹ In 1984, archaeologist Herbert Kraft of Seton Hall University asked Nora Thompson Dean (“Touching Leaves”), a Delaware elder, for a term to use when referring to the Munsee/Delaware homeland rather than having to refer, clumsily, to the myriad modern geographic boundaries that mark the traditional seventeenth-century homeland. She suggested Lenapehoking (Kraft 2001:9 fn. 2) and her suggestion will be followed here. For an overall view of the Munsee, see Goddard 1978.

² Here I follow Merwick 2005 and Van Zandt 1998 in referring to Native peoples in the Colonial period as the Americans.

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Munsee³ were in no way marginal. They were not simply a backdrop for great events. Far from it, they were full center stage. This was their country. They were the ones who looked after the first Europeans, shared meals with them, traded with them, worked on construction projects with them, fought with them, signed treaties with them, and had children with them. And yet today, although the Dutch are remembered, and often celebrated, the Munsee themselves are largely forgotten or ignored, their stories untold. Yet their very stories challenge the traditional, romantic, and self-congratulatory ones so common to settler societies (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995:4).

There is an emerging movement to “re-vision” (*sensu* Richter 1992:2) colonial/settler history and its conventional stories and to work toward a “reshaping of what scholars call American history” (Greene 2007:235; but see Zuckerman 2007) Archaeological finds made nearly a century ago at Munsee sites in New York City provide a unique opportunity to contribute to such a re-visioning and reshaping of colonial New Amsterdam. Certainly, New Amsterdam cannot be understood without considering the complex interactions between the Americans and the newcomers, the Europeans and the Africans, most of the latter enslaved. The Munsee were assuredly a vital part of that colonial world. But in considering that colonial world and its history, it is crucial to remember that the Munsee, in addition, had their own world and history.⁴ They were not simply “an appendage to colonial history” (Trigger 1984:32). Like all Native peoples, the Munsee had their own “internal dynamics and that intertribal relations and those between Indians and whites were determined by more than the colonial situation”(Trigger 1984: 32; see also Cohen 2008; DuVal 2006;and Richter 2001).

This essay focuses on two prominent Munsee, both well-known figures in New Amsterdam and in Lenapehoking.⁵ Wampage, also known as An Hoock, was a member of the Siwanoy group of Munsee who lived in what is now the Bronx. He was a patriot who fought for his homeland during Kieft’s War, one of the worst of all the North American colonial wars. Penhawitz, also known as Mechowodt and One Eye, was a member of the Canarsee group who lived in what is now Brooklyn. He was a diplomat from a powerful family who sued for peace during that conflict.

³ Following the example of Brandao and Starna (2004:741–742), who in turn followed Daniel Richter, I use the phrase “*the* Munsee” to refer to the actions of a particular community or followers of a particular leader and not to the actions “of a unitary, state organized form of decision making” (Richter 1992:7).

⁴ See Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis (1995:4) for a discussion of how settler societies tend to see history as beginning at the time of European colonization and how this distorts and makes the intricate histories of indigenous people, before and during contact, irrelevant. They also elaborate on Etienne and Leacock’s (1980:5) pertinent discussion of how social scientists sometimes give indigenous peoples a static, common past, which denies change, individuality and history.

⁵ Obviously, Munsee women also played major roles in the events of that time. Unfortunately, the seventeenth-century European documents give all Native people, but especially Native women, scant reference (Cantwell and Wall 2011). I have chosen to focus in this essay on Wampage and Penhawitz who are mentioned in the records, who were apparently well-known at the time and whose territory is identified (Cantwell 2008).

Artifacts discovered in the territories of these two Americans give some clues to the actions and choices they and their contemporaries made as they worked, in the currents of change that swirled around them, to maintain their traditions, deal with increasing European ecological imperialism (cf. Crosby 1986), and forge strategic economic and political alliances with the Europeans.⁶

Although no portraits were painted of these two major seventeenth-century figures, some general descriptions of Native peoples at that time were made by contemporary Dutch chroniclers. Using these, we can imagine how an artist in those days might have depicted Penhawitz and Wampage. This imaginary artist might have painted them wearing “matchcoats,” imported woolen duffle cloth that they got in the fur trade that they had chosen to wear that day. These two Munsee leaders probably wore their trade cloth “over the right shoulder and tied in a knot around the waist and from there[hanging] down to the feet” (Van der Donck 2008:79–80).⁷ Under this outer garment, they would have worn a traditional hide breechclout and, on their feet, moccasins of deer or elk hide. As he painted their faces on his canvas, the Dutch artist would have copied the red and black face paint and the tattoos that they, like so many Munsee men, wore. Depending on the day that their portraits were painted, these two men may have shaven their heads on both sides, leaving a shorn middle lock to which a dyed deer hair roach or feathered circlet was attached or they may have simply braided their long scalp lock and let it hang over one shoulder (Van der Donck 2008:80–81; Jameson 1909:217). Like their relatives, friends, and neighbors, they probably oiled their bodies with bear and raccoon fat that day as protection against the elements, either the cold or the sun (Van der Donck 2008:81). And they likely had, that morning, slung around their necks a quill-embroidered *notassen*, or sack to keep their pipes, tobacco, and other personal items close by. A careful, observant artist might have added small strings of wampum or shell beads hanging from their ears, other wampum decorating their clothing, and pendant necklaces decorated with more wampum or metal (Goddard 1978:218).⁸ Perhaps one or the other of

⁶ The Munsee, like peoples everywhere, had a long history of, and much experience in, responding to challenges in their physical and social worlds. Indians in what is now the New York City area had been responding to challenges for thousands of years before the Europeans and Africans came. The Munsee seventeenth century responses are one link in that long chain of adaptation.

⁷ In earlier days, before they traded for wool, and even after, the men wore, in the winter, cloaks of fur and feathers (Jameson 1909:217).

⁸ These shell beads had ritual and social importance for Native peoples throughout the Northeast before the arrival of the Europeans. Like copper (see below), shell beads had mythological origins and were related to the concept of life itself. Exchanges of wampum marked every important event in an individual’s life as well as social relations between social groups. The beads were made from shell fish found along the coasts of Long Island and southern New England—from the central column of the whelk shell and from the purple spot on a quahog shell. Europeans soon wanted wampum for the fur trade with Indians in the interior who were eager for it and also to use in exchange in treaties with Native Nations. The Europeans also began demanding large amounts in tribute from the coastal peoples, many of whom reorganized their economies around its manufacture. For a while, the Europeans also used the shell beads as money, not only to buy furs, but also grains, land, and services, even putting it in church collection plates. A full discussion of wampum, its manufacture and use, is beyond the scope of this paper. See Cantwell and Wall 2001, 2008; Ceci 1977; and Williams and Flinn 1990, as well as the extensive bibliographies in those monographs for more information.

these leaders chose to be painted side by side with his wife, whose name, alas, was not recorded. She might have decided to wear trade cloth that day, folded as her husband's to cover her upper body with another piece folded into "a petticoat" that she had embroidered with wampum. She would have held her hair back with a head band, also embroidered with wampum, with more wampum circling her waist and wrists and dangling from her ears (Van der Donck 2008:79–80). But however Penhawitz and Wampage may have chosen to present themselves that day had they, in fact, stood for a portrait, the gaze each would have given the artist and those who, down the centuries, viewed the paintings, would have been that of a proud and confident man, one who saw himself as equal to all, subservient to none (cf. Van der Donck 2008:80).

Some Monster of the Sea

Oral tradition has it that when the Munsee saw a European ship in their waters, they wondered if it was "some monster of the sea" (Jameson 1909:293; see also Heckewelder 1841). And in many ways they may have been right. This "monster" almost certainly refers to the *Halve Maen*, the ship that Henry Hudson sailed into New York harbor in 1609. That voyage was marked by exchanges of goods and violence, both heralds of the trade and bloodshed in the century ahead. The area's potential for the fur trade was quickly realized and Dutch traders soon followed Hudson into Lenapehoking. In the 1620s, the Dutch West India Company acquired a trade monopoly in the new colony of New Netherland and "the monster of the sea" began to settle down in Lenapehoking. Although the details of the first European settlement of what would become New York City have been lost (Jacobs 2005:42), roughly it seems that in 1624 (or 1623) the Company sent a small group to lay claim to New Netherland. Some from that party were left on what is now Governors Island, in New York Harbor, one of the finest natural harbors in North America. The island, a stone's throw from Manhattan, was in Canarsee territory and was known to the Munsee as Pagannack and had been a fishing camp for generations of Native peoples. It was renamed Noten Eylandt (Nut Island) by the European newcomers who promptly set up both a trading post and an entrepot there. Later, the company decided to shift operations to the tip of Manhattan island. Peter Minuit, the director of the colony at that time, worked with Munsee leaders to "buy" the island of Manhattan in 1626. The settlement of New Amsterdam, a raw European outpost in the middle of Indian country, had now begun.⁹ In these early years of coexistence, the Munsee did not yet realize that they were perceived as selling the land in the European sense, that is permanently alienating themselves from it. Rather, they

⁹For a discussion of early New Amsterdam, see Shorto 2004 and for New Netherland, see Jacobs 2005.

thought they were simply allowing the Europeans to use it for a while. This basic cultural misunderstanding was one among the many causes of the wars yet to come (Cantwell and Wall 2001:142–133, 297–298, 2010; Grumet 1986; Herbster 2007; Jacobs 2005:42–44; Siversten 2007:220–221; and Van Laer 1924:260, n.8).

Initially, there were peaceful and cordial relations between the newcomers and their Indian hosts. The Munsee incorporated the Dutch into their traditional systems of helping and sharing. But within a few decades the Europeans were more self-sufficient, more arrogant, and they no longer needed the help of their Indian neighbors, whose land had now been hunted out of beaver. Some, in fact, saw them as in the way. For many Europeans, as Trelease has argued (Trelease 1960:xiii), the local Algonquians had become the expendable Indians, with whom the Dutch were competing for land, while the Mohawk, one of the Iroquoian Nations to the North, remained the valuable Indians, the allies with whom the Dutch were cooperating in the all important fur trade.¹⁰

Conflict was probably inevitable given the different Algonquian and European world views. Some were related to the inevitable daily cultural misunderstandings, others to their very different concepts towards land and animals. Dutch farm animals such as pigs and cattle wandered freely, sometimes destroying Indian crops. Indian dogs, in turn, bothered European free-ranging livestock. There were instances of cheating, drunkenness, and theft on all sides which led to arguments and often violent resolutions. There were also more complex problems stimulated by the European arrivals and the fur trade that sometimes led to conflicts among various Indian groups competing with each other for highly desirable European trade goods, hunting territories for furs to use in trade, or access to trade routes. Native peoples soon found themselves involved in an entirely new form of warfare, whereby Europeans would massacre entire communities, destroy villages and farmland, and burn stored harvested crops (Haefeli 1991; Merwick 2005, 2006; Otto 2006; Starna 2003; Trelease 1960; Williams 1995). One of the most infamous of these conflicts was Kieft's War (1640–1645), named after Willem Kieft, the Director-General of New Netherland at that time. In the midst of that war, a massacre of Indian peoples took place that ranks as one of the most brutal in colonial America. Among the principals were Kieft and the colony's secretary, Cornelis van Tienhoven. Although some colonists agreed with them, others most decidedly did not. The disagreements over the war ultimately led to the recall of Kieft and the appointment of Peter Stuyvesant as Director.¹¹

At the end of February 1643, hundreds of terrified Munsee began streaming into New Amsterdam looking for asylum. They had fled many miles through deep snows to escape deadly attacks, from other tribute-seeking Indian groups, on their settlements in what is now Westchester. The Munsee families moved into refugee camps

¹⁰ For a discussion of the relationship between the Mohawk and the Dutch, see among others Brandao and Starna 2004; Richter 1992; Rothschild 2003; Snow 1994. For a discussion of the period of historic contact in the area, see Grumet 1995a.

¹¹ Trelease 1960 remains one of the best sources on this war. See also Haefeli 1991; Jacobs 2005; Merwick 2005; and Otto 2006.

near relatives, one to the northeast of the Dutch fort at Corlears Hook and the other just across the Hudson River at Pavonia. At first, the Dutch helped them with food and shelter but Kieft had long been determined “to break the mouths of the Indians” (Jameson 1909:227) and he saw this as his opportunity. Although some colonists, like David Pietersz de Vries, urged patience and humanity in dealing with these frightened people who had arrived in the dead of a fierce winter, Kieft and his allies ignored them and ordered a midnight attack on the refugee groups at a time when they would be sleeping.

De Vries later described that night’s horror at the Pavonia refugee camp:

I remained that night at the Governor’s, sitting ... by the kitchen fire, when about midnight I heard a great shrieking, and I ran to the ramparts of the fort, and looked over to Pavonia. Saw nothing but firing, and heard the shrieks of the savages murdered in their sleep... When it was day the soldiers returned to the fort, having massacred or murdered eighty Indians ... in their sleep; where infants were torn from their mother’s breasts, and hacked to pieces in the presence of the parents, and the pieces thrown into the fire and in the water, and other sucklings, being bound to small boards [cradle boards or carriers] were cut, stuck, and pierced, and miserably massacred in a manner to move a heart of stone. Some were thrown into the river, and when the fathers and mothers endeavored to save them, the soldiers would not let them come on land but made both parents and children drown—children from five to six years of age, and also some old and decrepit persons. Those who fled from this onslaught, and concealed themselves in the neighboring sedge, and when it was morning, came out to beg a piece of bread, and to be permitted to warm themselves, were murdered in cold blood and tossed into the fire or the water. Some came to our people in the country with their hands, some with their legs cut off, and some holding their entrails in their arms, and others had such horrible cuts and gashes, that worse than they were could never happen (Jameson 1909; 227–28).¹²

All told, over 120 Munsee are reported to have been butchered that night.¹³ Those who carried out the slaughter returned to Fort Amsterdam bringing with them thirty prisoners as well as the heads of some of the Munsee refugees who had

¹² Jameson 1909: 227–229. See Haefeli 1991 and Merwick 2005 on the brutality of the European soldiers at that time. There is some discussion as to originality and possible exaggeration of this account by DeVries, a known opponent of Kieft’s policies. Jameson (1909:228) and Shorto (2004:124) suggest the influence of the pamphlet, *Breeden-Raedt* (Murphy 1854), probably authored by Cornelis Melyn under the pseudonym I. A. G. W. C. See also Otto 2006:119. For more on the pamphlet, see Merwick 2006:151–169.

¹³ There is a tantalizing reference to the fate of the bodies of those who died that dreadful night. Almost two and a half centuries later, in the spring of 1886, construction workers in Pavonia, close to the reputed site of Kieft’s midnight massacre, uncovered a number of skeletons that local residents were sure were the remains of the hastily buried Munsee refugees killed on that cold February night. The nineteenth-century newspaper account of this discovery states that crowds “gathered around the place ... while the excavating was going on and looked at the skulls and bones. The number of bodies can only be determined by means of the skulls, as the bones are all mixed together and many of them crumble at the touch into fine dust.” (Anonymous 1886:8). We have no way of knowing whether these human remains that crumbled into dust were in fact those of the victims whose screams De Vries heard that night or whether they represent some other event entirely.

been killed in the attack. Amidst the protests of a number of the colonists, Kieft congratulated the soldiers and freebooters. As for the imprisoned Munsee who had survived that dreadful night, some were enslaved and either handed over as rewards to the soldiers who had captured them or sent to Bermuda as gifts to the governor of that island.

Penhawitz, a prominent Canarsee leader from a powerful family, quickly tried to quell the violence. He sent envoys bearing a white flag to Fort Amsterdam to find out why the Dutch had killed some of his people when he had done “nothing but favors” to the Dutch (Jameson 1909:230) and convened a peace conference in what is now Brooklyn. One sachem, whose name was not recorded, detailed the Americans’ grievances against the Dutch. According to De Vries, one of the Dutch emissaries at the conference, the sachem spoke of

how we [i.e. Dutch] first came upon their coast; that we sometimes had no victuals; they gave us their Turkish beans and Turkish wheat, they helped us with oysters and fish to eat, and now for a reward we had killed their people. . . . He related also that at the beginning of our voyaging there, we left our people behind with the goods to trade, until the ships should come back; they had preserved these people like the apple of their eye; yea, they had given them their daughters to sleep with, by whom they had begotten children, and there roved many an Indian who was begotten by a Swanneken [European], but our people [i.e. Dutch] had become so villainous as to kill their own blood (Jameson 1909:230–31).

The Munsee gave strings of wampum to the Dutch envoys as a sign of friendship and peace and, together, they went to Fort Amsterdam to try to prevent the conflict from escalating. But any peace was short-lived. Despite the attempts of De Vries and Penhawitz, the massacres set in motion a series of raids and counter raids in which, as in all such situations, everyone lost.

This particular war raged on and off for two more long years. During its course one of the most famous women in Colonial America, Anne Hutchinson, was killed. Banished in 1638 from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for her antinomian doctrines, she eventually came to New Netherland along with her family and several followers and established a plantation, known as Anne’s Hoeck or Neck, in Siwanoy territory, which is now part of the Bronx. Her land was part of a Dutch grant to which the Siwanoy had not been part. In fact, a delegation from the resident Siwanoy went to her plantation and, taking the tools from the workmen who were building her house, urged her and her group to leave (Bolton 1920:32).

In the September following the refugee killings at Pavonia and Corlaers Hook, Hutchinson’s plantation was attacked and burned. She, along with most of her family and followers, was murdered. Her killing was unusual for, as Adriaen van der Donck, a Dutch contemporary noted (2008:101) it was not common for the Indians to kill women and children. In fact, Hutchinson’s daughter was taken by the Munsees to live with them. A young Munsee patriot, Wampage, reportedly took credit for Hutchinson’s death and, following tradition, took a variant of her name as his own. And that name, An hoock, placed after the mark “A H”, appears on a number of

Fig. 2.1 The mark of An Hoock, a prominent Munsee leader who was also known as Wampage



deeds, including the one in 1692 conveying most of Siwanoy territory to the freeholders of Westchester (see below) (Fig. 2.1).

Other-World Grandfathers

The historical documents pay scarce heed to Munsee life during these tumultuous years. There are, however, a few archaeological sites in Wampage's and Penhawitz's territories, dug or collected nearly a century ago, using the archaeological techniques of the time, that provide clues to understanding the Americans' materiality during that turbulent period. These clues come from a bare handful of artifacts—arrowheads made from European metals—that both shaped, and were shaped by, traditional ideology. The arrowheads were found at Weir Creek and Ryders Pond.¹⁴

The Weir Creek site, in the Throgs Neck section of the modern Bronx, had been occupied on and off for at least six thousand years.¹⁵ It was dug first in 1900 by M. R. Harrington, then working for the American Museum of Natural History. Later, in 1918, Alanson Skinner and Amos Oneroad excavated there for the Museum of the American Indian, now the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. All three archaeologists are important figures in the history of American archaeology. They were among the first professionals to work in the United States. Notably, Oneroad was also one of the first Native American archaeologists. Skinner argued that in the seventeenth century Weir Creek was an isolated camp to which the Siwanoy had retreated at the height of Kieft's War (1919:51).

¹⁴ In this instance, I have chosen to follow, albeit somewhat loosely, Liebmann's (2008:361, 367, 368) use of the concept of materiality in his study of revitalization movements. For other sites where arrow points made from European metals were found, see Cantwell and Wall 2001:316. For difficulties in interpreting these sites, see Salwen 1989.

¹⁵ This site is sometimes known as the Throgs Neck site or the Schley Avenue site.

Artifacts from the Ryders Pond site, in the Marine Park section of modern Brooklyn, were gathered up a century ago by local farmers as they plowed their fields. By some accounts, they collected over 900 spear points as well as countless other tools and ceramics. One local farmer and collector, D. B. Austin, reportedly also found a number of Indian graves there, spaced at regular intervals of 35 ft. Around the same time, construction workers were putting in roads in that area and local residents noted that they too came across about a dozen burials, covered with shell, and likely all were Native American. A half a century after these finds, two avocational archaeologists, Julius Lopez and Stanley Wiesniewski, managed to track down some of the hundreds of artifacts that Austin and his cohort had found. But because of the way the artifacts had been collected in the first place and the lack of any records, all they could do was to catalog the finds. Their efforts, however, made it clear that Ryders Pond is a place, like Weir Creek, where generations of Indian families had lived, worked, and buried their dead at various times over a period of at least six thousand years (Bolton 1920, 1922; Lopez and Wisniewski 1978a, b).

Native peoples were certainly living at Ryders Pond in the seventeenth century in a substantial settlement with fields of maize, beans, and squash with a burial ground nearby. The area was probably then known as Shanscomacocke (Bolton 1922:159–61). Historical accounts suggest that a longhouse once stood there, but no traces of it have been found.¹⁶ Some scholars believe that the residents at Shanscomacocke were joined after Keift's War by relatives who had been living in Keshaechquereren, an important Canarsee seventeenth-century settlement in what is today Flatbush in Brooklyn. Keshaechquereren, according to tradition, was the main council place where Indians from this part of Long Island gathered for major meetings and religious ceremonies. But at the height of the war, its residents fled their homes to avoid being caught up in the hostilities. When the war was over, they came to Shanscomacocke, today's Ryders Pond site, and settled with their relatives and friends who were already living there (Lopez and Wisniewski 1978a, b; Pickman 2000; Van Wyck 1924; Wall and Cantwell 2004).

For archaeologists frustrated by the cavalier destruction of the city's archaeological sites over the years, these few seventeenth-century metal arrowheads, recovered nearly 100 years ago at Weir Creek and Ryders Pond, in the territories of Wampage and Penhawitz, give us one of the very few opportunities we have to understand the creative nature of Munsee trading and decision making during the early years of their encounters with Europeans. These copper and brass points were not trade items in their own right. They, and other weapons like them, were carefully crafted by Indian armourers throughout the Northeast from metals recycled from European trade kettles that had been exchanged for furs, corn, or other commodities. In fact, Native people on Staten Island, friendly with De Vries, once asked him for his copper kettle so that they could "make darts for their arrows"

¹⁶ In 1679, an 80 year old Munsee woman, whose name was not recorded, brought the Labadist missionary, Jasper Danckaerts and his companions, to her longhouse, which was situated in Canarsee territory. For a description of her family's longhouse and surrounding fields, see Danckaerts 1941:124–126.

(Jameson 1909:229). Although European guns and metal trade goods such as knives, kettles, and axes were highly valued by Indians for their practical and prestige qualities, many anthropologists now argue that the metals themselves, copper and brass, were important not only because they were useful but also because they fit easily into traditional value systems (Bradley 1987; Hamell 1983, 1987; and Miller and Hamell 1986). Native copper had been important in Indian beliefs for thousands of years and been traded throughout eastern North America long before the Europeans came with their own trade offerings (Cantwell 1984; Seaman 1979; Winters 1968). It had mythical origins, was associated with exchanges with extremely powerful spiritual beings, including other-world Grandfathers such as horned serpents. These gifts from the spirit world could assure long life, physical and spiritual well-being, and success, especially in hunting, fishing, warfare, and courtship (Hamell 1983, 1987; and Miller and Hamell 1986). No wonder, then, that these metals had such great power in the ritual and social lives of the Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples throughout the Northeast. They wanted copper because its power was so intimately related to the very concept of life itself for them, as for many Indian peoples, “history had long been the realm in which dreams and myths took on a tangible form” (White 1991:523).

It seems likely that the supernatural powers long associated with native metals were transferred to the newly acquired European metals they resembled. If so, then these metal points may be the material form of the continuing importance of traditional concepts of spiritual power in the daily lives of Munsee people at that time. These points are also a powerful reminder that European commodities held multiple meanings for Indian peoples. European objects were not necessarily valuable because they were somehow seen as superior to traditional goods. They may sometimes have been sought out for the very reason that they resembled objects that were already valuable in their social and spiritual lives long before the Europeans arrived with their trade goods. These goods were simply domesticated or “indigenized” and went on to play an active role in a continuing Indian history.

Kieft’s War marked a turning point in the relationship between the Americans and the Europeans. In the early years of the New Netherland colony, the area somewhat resembled what Richard White in his seminal study (1991) called a “Middle Ground,” a period of “mutual invention,” a common ground in which both groups tried “to follow normal conventions of behavior” with neither side having a real advantage and violence at a minimum (1991:50–52; see also Cantwell 2008; Gosden 2004; Silliman 2005; White 2006).¹⁷ This was a period of sociality, hybridity, and creativity for all groups along the coast. And these metal arrowheads remind us of those early, relatively benign, years of early contact between the Americans and the

¹⁷ The very early years of contact with Europeans, from roughly 1609 to near the mid 1620s, are probably best characterized as what Kathleen DuVal calls a “native ground,” that is a place dominated by Natives who set their own terms of engagement with European people (2006:5).

Europeans. In those years, Indian Country and New Amsterdam were distinguished by “a rough balance of power, a mutual need or a desire for what the other possesses, and an inability by either side to commandeer enough force to compel the other to change” (White 2006:10).

In the aftermath of the war all of that dramatically changed. New Netherland was now being transformed into a settler colony, slavery was more established (Cantwell and Wall 2008b), and colonialism consequently took on a different, darker, form.¹⁸ Certainly from the point of the Americans, the situation had now greatly deteriorated. The Mohawks were the preferred trading partner, now that coastal hunting grounds were being rapidly depleted, and the Munsee were becoming more and more marginalized. In some ways, colonialism had changed into, and approached, what Chris Gosden termed a *terra nullius* form, that is a colonialism where colonial powers showed a “lack of recognition of prior ways of life of people encountered which leads to excuses for mass appropriations of land, destruction of social relations and death through war and disease” (2004:26). Nevertheless, although the Dutch were appropriating land for their expanding settler society, they remained scrupulous in buying the land; however the two sides may have understood such purchases. Therefore, the term *terra nullius* seems inappropriate for this growing erosion of the common ground in New Netherland that took place in the aftermath of the war and perhaps the designation *terra afflicta* is more appropriate (Cantwell 2008).

We Ought to People the Country

Irrevocable changes were taking place in Lenapehoking in the wake of the war and the land itself was being transformed.¹⁹ Hints of these dramatic changes come from two sites in Wampage’s territory, Weir Creek and Clasons Point. Like Weir Creek, the neighboring Clasons Point site was dug by Skinner and Oneroad, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Skinner argued that this was the site of Snakapins, a seventeenth-century Siwanoy settlement of some sixty families and he believed that some of these families had relocated for a time to Weir Creek to hide from the ongoing Dutch raids during Kieft’s War. At both these sites, he and Oneroad found pig and cattle bones (Skinner 1919: 113, 118, 123; Bolton 1919).²⁰

¹⁸ For the darker side of settler societies, see the historian, Jurgen Osterhammel, who writes that they can lead to “the most violent form of European expansion” (2005:42 in Greene 2007:238). See also Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995:1–12.

¹⁹ For a description of the area as it was around the time of the European incursions, see Cantwell and Wall 2001:86–116.

²⁰ Remains of European domestic animals were also found in Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx and the Bowmans Brook site in Staten Island (Skinner 1919:118).

We don't know how the bones of these particular European domesticated animals wound up mingled with other, more traditional, Munsee household refuse at the sites. The meat could have been given, bought, stolen, or the livestock raised by the community—there are accounts that suggest all of these possibilities. But no matter how this meat got there to be incorporated into the indigenous diet, these faunal remains bring home the profound and irrevocable economic and ecological changes taking place on this afflicted land.

These changes were many, varied, and, as always, interconnected. Colonization itself took place near the end of the Little Ice Age (A.D. 1550–1700), whose effects on local ecosystems are little known but surely are an important part of the story (Brose et al. 2001:7; Pederson et al. 2005). Firewood was essential for everyone at that time and yet there are reports in the colonial documents that by mid-century firewood itself was scarce. Council documents show that colonists in New Amsterdam were even reduced to cutting down palisades, for which they were punished, for fuel during this time of “sharp and bitter cold” (Gerhing 1995 xiii, 4–5).

As the colonial settlements grew after the war and New Netherland became a settler colony, increasing numbers of Dutch settlers, some bringing enslaved Africans along with them, began expanding more and more into areas traditionally used by the Munsee. In addition, the Dutch established a community of enslaved Africans just outside of New Amsterdam, further keeping the Munsee at a distance and controlling their movements (Cantwell and Wall 2008, 2010; Gehring 1980; Siversten 2007; Van Zandt 1998).²¹ All these newcomers, settler and enslaved, were involved one way or another in cutting down forests for fuel and lumber; clearing fields; as well as planting European gardens and crops and grazing European domesticated animals, both alien to the area. In some cases, overcropping exhausted the land (Schaefer and Janowitz 2005; Van Laer 1908:331).

European livestock did more than damage Munsee crops and provoke conflicts. Their impact becomes clear, as William Cronon has argued for neighboring New England, “when they are treated as integral elements in a complex system of environmental and cultural relationships. The pig was not merely a pig but a creature bound among other things to the fence, the dandelion, and a very special definition of property” (1983:14). European animals, farming practices, and concepts of property drastically altered local Native ecosystems. This meant that the habitats of many of the animals that the Munsee had traditionally hunted and the plant communities on which they had depended were destroyed. They now had to find new and innovative strategies to deal with a changing landscape (Cantwell and Wall 2010).

²¹ Earlier, in 1643, Kieft had begun to issue land grants to the colony's enslaved Africans in an area just to the north of New Amsterdam (Gehring 1980). This community, according to some scholars served as a buffer against possible Native or European attacks (Cantwell and Wall 2008; Van Zandt 1998) and, in the process impeded Native movements and further changed the local ecologies.

Compounding these ecological problems was the tense climate of ongoing conflict. Not only did this frequently take energies away from customary activities, but both Munsee and Dutch crops were on occasion destroyed as part of the mutual punitive nature of these conflicts (Jameson 1909:209, 277; Merwick 2005; Williams 1995). Adding to this was the fact that the Europeans now began controlling Munsee movements in their own homeland, further disrupting their traditional economies (e.g. Siversten 2007:221; Stokes 1915–1928: I 86–7).

And so these pig and cattle bones found in Wampage's territory suggest that acquiring European animals and perhaps other foods, by whatever means, may have become one way of replacing traditional foods now hard to come by. We don't know how quickly or to what extent the Munsees incorporated these alien foods into their diet—we simply haven't any properly dug sites to give us that information. But these few bones, nonetheless, are the tangible clues that suggest the enormity of some of the upheavals and the resulting conflicts that the Munsee faced: the demands of tribute and trade; the causes and consequences of war; the competition over land; the destruction of traditional ecosystems and economies; the increasing size of settlements along the shore; the encroaching Dutch farms; and their increasing dependence on colonists whose own interests and economies were totally incompatible with theirs.

What William Cronon writes of New England applies to New York as well:

[A] distant world and its inhabitants gradually [became] part of another people's ecosystem, so that it is becoming increasingly difficult to know which ecosystem is interacting with which culture. . . . They rapidly came to inhabit a single world, but in the process the landscape . . . was so transformed that the Indian's earlier way of interacting with their environment became impossible (1983:14–15).

The entangled effects of trade, war, the increasing size of the settler society and its needs, and changing ecosystems were only part of the turmoil. The most catastrophic and irrevocable agents of change were biological ones, the European diseases that killed countless Munsee and other Indian peoples. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Indian people who died along the coast during these epidemics. In 1656, New Netherlander Adriaen van der Donck reported that his Indian neighbors told him that before the European arrivals and before small pox broke out amongst them, they had been far more numerous. By mid-century, they said "there is now barely one for every ten" of their former population (Van der Donck 2008:69). Modern estimates of Munsee deaths from these diseases range from 50% to as high as 91% (Grumet 1989a, 1990; Snow and Lamphear 1988). But whatever the actual numbers may have been, this widowing of the Native landscape,²² was an enormous demographic and personal catastrophe with profound social and economic consequences (Jones 2003; Starna 1992) and the central role of that tragedy in the stories of the Munsee and of the Dutch colony has to be acknowledged and understood.

²² This is a paraphrase of Jennings (1976:30).

Under the Blue Canopy of Heaven

Kieft's War ended with the signing of a peace treaty at Fort Amsterdam on August 30, 1645 "under the blue canopy of heaven" (O'Callaghan and Fernow 1856–1883 XIII:18). Present at the signing was Penhawitz's son, Meautinnemin. One of the conditions of that treaty was that Anne Hutchinson's daughter, who had been captured during Wampage's raid on her plantation several years earlier, be returned to the English. The Munsee were as reluctant to return her as she was to being redeemed. They had become very attached to each other in the intervening years and did not wish to part (Salisbury 1982; Shonnard and Spooner 1900).

There is little further mention of Penhawitz in the written records. Although some scholars (e.g. Grumet 1995b:33) suggested that he died in battle at Fort Neck on Long Island during Kieft's War, his death is not documented. His son, Meautinnemin, later known as Tackapausha, became the sachem or leader for the Massapequa, a western Long Island group. He took his father's place as a major figure and diplomat in New Netherland and an ally of the Dutch.²³ In fact, in 1655, when he sent an intermediary to meet with his counterpart, Peter Stuyvesant, Stuyvesant declared

that in the former differences between their sachem and our nation ... the present sachem's father, called 'one eye,' [Penhawitz] had directed and ordered his son, now called Tachpaussa [sic] to make peace with the Dutch and ... to keep it, and that he should forget for the future what had happened and that he must not for this reason, shed any more blood in the future. The present sachem has obeyed the command of his father, and has done no harm to the Dutch nation, not even to the value of a dog, and he still intended to continue doing so" (Gehring 1995:145).

In return for Tackapausha's support, Stuyvesant promised to build him a house or fort that "would be furnished with Indian trade or Commodities" (Hicks 1896–1904, 1:4344). That promised fort is almost surely the Fort Massapeag site, at Fort Neck, in Massapequa on Long Island (Solecki 2006). Fort Massapeag, excavated by Ralph Solecki and colleagues, is a mid-seventeenth century quadrangular earthwork, 100' square, with two bastions, and a palisade made from red pine, the posts shaped with metal axes. It is not certain from the archaeological finds whether the fort was built by the Dutch, enslaved Africans, the Indians, or some combination of these groups. There was also a nearby Indian village, possibly contemporary, that was destroyed by modern development and little is known of it. At the fort proper, Solecki found areas where wampum was made as well as numerous mid-century Dutch trade goods such as mouth harps and pipes, and a host of other, Native, artifacts (Cantwell and Wall 2001; Solecki 2006). This trading post/fort, facing a salt meadow with easy access to the Great South Bay and from there to the Long Island coast and New York harbor, might well have been one of the remaining pockets of

²³ Tackapausha is also referred to as Tackapousha (Solecki 2006). See Grumet 1995b for a discussion of this family. For more on Tackapausha, see Cantwell and Wall 2001; Grumet 1995b; Solecki 2006; and Strong 1997.



Fig. 2.2 The Historic Marker at Fort Massapeag (2008). (Photo Credit: Diana diZerega Wall)

the middle ground that still functioned in coastal New Netherland, a place where Indians still had autonomy, social relationships and alliances between the various groups could be formed or maintained, trading opportunities evaluated, and attempts at understanding made (Fig. 2.2).

Tackapausha remained a firm ally of Stuyvesant and, working under the earlier rules of accommodation and exchange, agreed to help him in the mid-Hudson Valley Esopus Wars (1659–1660 and 1663–1664) in return for booty and gifts that included duffle for his warriors, a coat for himself, as well as, perhaps, protection from neighboring New England tribes and the English settlers on the eastern end of the island. His men joined a larger Dutch force on several forays against the Algonquian-speaking Esopus Indians. Some scholars think that his younger brother, Choheyconnaus, was part of that military force. In any case, at the end of the Esopus Wars, Choheyconnaus was one of the dignitaries at Fort Amsterdam on May 15, 1664 to witness the signing of that peace treaty. Over the years, Penhawitz's sons, Tackapausha and Choheyconnaus, along with other family members, sold the land that made up Fort Neck, with the last parcel sold in 1697 (O'Callaghan and Fernow 1856–1883 XIII: 284, 285, 286, 295–296, 375; Strong 1997: 284). There is genealogical evidence suggesting that Choheyconnaus (and, therefore, Penhawitz) may have descendants living today among the members of the Shinnecock Nation at the eastern end of Long Island (Strong 1998:71–72).²⁴

²⁴ Strong 1997:240 suggests that the Massapeag fought under the command of Choheyconnaus [*sic*]. For land sales, see Grumet 1995b:35–6 and Strong 1997:297–9. For Choheyconnaus's lineage, see Strong 1998:71–73.

Wampage, under the name of An Hoock, is mentioned on a number of deeds including the one that sold most of the land that now makes up the modern borough of the Bronx to the freeholders of Westchester on May 27, 1692 (Bolton 1920; McNamara 1984). That land, which ranged from the Bronx to the Hutchinson Rivers, was sold for “2 gunns, 2 adzes, 2 kettles, 2 shirts, 2 coats, 1 barrel of cider, 6 bits of money” and, in addition, six shillings had been put aside for the Indians’ expenses and another three shillings for the costs of the supper, of which Wampage likely partook. The meal was provided for the Americans on the occasion of the signing of the deed (Bolton 1919:78).

Wampage’s fate has become the stuff of legend. One legend, still circulated by some guides at Pelham Manor, a historic house in Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx, claims that Wampage’s granddaughter, the “Indian Princess,” married Thomas Pell II, the third lord of Pelham Manor (e.g. Barr 1946). Although this gives a satisfying, romantic Hollywood ending to the tempestuous stories of the seventeenth century, there is, alas, no documentary evidence to support it.²⁵ The other legend focuses on an archaeological find, made in the early 1800s. The find was made by local antiquarians exploring Pelham Bay Park two hundred years ago. They were digging in a mound near the water’s edge that was popularly known as the place where An Hoock had been buried a century before, in the early 1700s. When they opened the mound, they discovered “a large sized skeleton, by the side of which lay the stone axe and flint spear of the tenant of the grave” (Bolton 1881:517). Intrigued by the report of the discovery of what could be An Hoock’s grave, M. R. Harrington, working much later, went back to the area in 1899 to look for more evidence of the burial of one of the best known figures in seventeenth-century Lenapehoking. Luck was not with him. He found that that part of the site had already been worn away. In 1918 Skinner found that the whole knoll itself had been carried off by the relentless coastal tides. (Skinner 1919:116). But if the antiquarians and local legends are right, Wampage had been buried in a traditional way, among his people, in his ancestral homeland.²⁶

Meanwhile, the destructive forces of an expanding settler society that needed more and more land, not only changed traditional ecosystems and subsistence strategies but ultimately led to the piece by piece sale of the now afflicted Lenapehoking. Leaders like Wampage or Penhawitz and his sons, seized the initiative and played a delicate game negotiating land sales and hoping to buy time to make decisions for

²⁵ While taking a tour of the historic house, Pelham Manor in December 2008, one guide told the group I was with the story of the marriage of Wampage’s granddaughter, the “Indian Princess,” to a Pell family member.

²⁶ Harrington found three other burials in Pelham Bay, each unaccompanied by grave goods, and several shell pits. There was nothing to confirm the burial found by the antiquarians was that of Wampage (Skinner 1919:116). It is difficult, of course, to evaluate long-standing local legends today but that does not mean that they have no credence. It is worth noting that by the beginning of the twentieth century, Skinner, in writing about Clasons Point, notes that local residents told him of Native people, who, after having left the area, frequently returned to honor their dead who had been buried in that area (Skinner 1919: 123). Bolton notes that local legend talks about Indian groups from the interior bringing their dead to nearby Old Ferry Point for burial (1922:223).

their future, maintain hunting or fishing rights, “buy European protection and forbearance” and “obligate...[the Europeans] to reciprocate in other ways” (Grumet 1989b:4). Anthropologist Robert Grumet has argued that these carefully thought out strategies of leaders like Wampage and the Penhawitz family “enabled the Lenape to not only survive the loss of their homeland, but to endure as a distinct people to the present day” (1989b:5).

By the end of the seventeenth-century, the surviving Munsee were largely gone from what is now the modern city of New York. By the middle of the following century, they were largely gone from Lenapehoking itself—their diaspora into the interior of the continent well underway.²⁷ And the omen, so jarring to the modern ear, that David de Vries thought he saw on the shores,—“ In the summer-time crabs come on the flat shores, of very good taste. Their claws are of the color of the flag of our Prince, orange, white, and blue, so that the crabs show sufficiently that we ought to people the country, and that it belongs to us “—had come true, but not for long (Jameson 1909:223). Before the century ended, New Netherland itself had become New York.

Where My Roots Are

The stories of Wampage, Penhawitz, their families, their Native contemporaries, and the worlds they dominated are offered as part of an attempt to re-vision colonial New Amsterdam. Their stories are an integral part of the reshaping of that conventional narrative and cast a fresh light into the complexity of the inter-cultural encounters of that time. But, their stories are part of other narratives as well. As Paul Cohen has pointed out, although Native history certainly informs colonial history, it is not confined to it (2008:408–9). The Americans were major actors in European colonial history but they were also actors in other worlds as well. In fact, a closer reading of the historical documents and the scant handful of artifacts recovered from century-old archaeological excavations suggests that in all of this, as Gilles Havard said of other Native people, Wampage, Penhawitz, and their families and contemporaries were likely “far from seeing themselves as actors on the European periphery, [but] believed themselves instead to be at the center of the world” (2003:50 cited in Cohen 2008:408).²⁸ New York has many stories.

Information gleaned from both documents and at archaeological sites such as Weir Creek and Ryders Pond show that Native traders in New Amsterdam were astute consumers of European goods. They carefully traded for European metal artifacts that fit easily into their own value systems and then creatively transformed them for their own purposes. Arrowheads made of these recycled European materials, with their associations to other-world grandfathers, both revitalized, and were

²⁷ See Goddard 1978, Grumet 1989b (especially for land sales), and Kraft 2001 for details.

²⁸ The quote is Cohen’s translation (2008:408) of a passage from Havard (Havard 2002:50).

shaped by, their belief systems. This hybrid weaponry may have given them the spiritual power they desired at that time (cf. Liebmann 2008).

At the height of Kieft's War, some Native leaders, such as Penhawitz, tried to quell the violence. Others, such as Wampage, chose to fight. In either case, families living in large unprotected villages in their territories, such as those at Snakapins (the Clasons Point site) or at Keshaechquereren, may have elected to make critical settlement shifts and moved to more secure locations. Skinner believed that some families from Snakapins relocated to what is now the Weir Creek site to avoid ongoing Dutch raids. He further suggested that they removed some of their dead from their graves at Snakapins when they moved and then reburied them at their new home at Weir Creek (Skinner 1919:114). Historical documents suggest that in the midst of the war, families living at Keshaechquereren moved to safer places and then, at war's end, joined family and friends at Shanscomacoke (the Ryders Pond site).

Penhawitz's son, Tackapausha, continued his father's pragmatic diplomacy and formed a mutually beneficial alliance with Peter Stuyvesant. Tackapausha supported the Dutch in the Esopus Wars for booty, other commodities, and protection from English and other Native groups. As part of his strategic politics, he secured a trading post/fort (the Fort Massapeag site) where his people could, in safety, trade and have the opportunities to make other kinds of alliances.

The expanding, slave-owning, settler society that New Amsterdam now was had, probably without intending to,²⁹ radically transformed traditional Munsee ecosystems and subsistence strategies. Disease and conflict compounded these ills and the settlers' hunger for land led, ultimately, to land dispossession for the Munsee. Although leaders like Wampage or the Penhawitz family carefully crafted land deals that would give them time and protection, by the end of the century many of the surviving Munsee had begun their own westward journeys to the interior, looking for new places to live. It is there that some, but not all, of their modern stories lie (Kraft 2001).

Today New York is a world capital populated by millions of people whose own homelands span the globe while many of the descendants of its seventeenth-century Native residents are now living all over the continent. Archaeological discoveries, made on Ellis Island in the 1980s, of human remains deemed to be Native American brought some members of the Munsee and Delaware diaspora back to their homeland. Working closely with the National Park Service, representatives of the Munsee and Delaware returned to New York on several occasions—for blessing ceremonies, some of which were in the Munsee language, and for the eventual reburial of the bones of those who literally or metaphorically, may have been their ancestors (Cantwell 1992–1993, 2000; Crespi 1987; Wall and Cantwell 2004).

²⁹ See Merwick 2006 for a perceptive account of how the Dutch could, without intending, cause great harm.

Fig. 2.3 Munsee grave markers on Ellis Island. The vertical markers honor the men and the cruciform markers honor the women who are buried there (Photo credit: Anne-Marie Cantwell)



The human remains were discovered during renovations of the Main Building on the island in preparation for the opening of the Museum of Immigration (Pousson 1986; Wall and Cantwell 2004). The discovery, analysis, subsequent blessings, and reburials of these human remains on Ellis Island, itself a national icon of the American immigrant experience, became enveloped in important issues of memory, identity, ethics, social justice, history, and spirituality (Cantwell 2000; Cantwell and Wall 2010). The ceremonies and simple grave markers of these individuals, whose names and stories we do not know (nor even whose dates are certain, see Cantwell 2000) but were here before the European encounters, further challenge the conventional histories of a settler society where history begins with the European arrivals. They underline the fact that this entire area was Native land long before there was a United States and long before millions of immigrants passed through Ellis Island on their way to becoming citizens of that new nation (Fig. 2.3).

Linda Poolaw, then Vice-President of the Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma, recounted her voyage back to her homeland for “the honor of viewing the bones” at one of the first blessing ceremonies in 1987. She writes, “Way above the clouds, looking down on the ground I was trying to imagine my ancestors crossing all over that land from the East Coast. How difficult it must have been....I imagined that this was where my roots are and my people, the remains of the people I was going to

view in a few hours being proof of that” (1987:29). At a later ceremony, Edward Thompson, also from the descendant group, told a reporter that “We’re preparing them to live forever and ever in tranquility” (Bloom 1987:21). The human remains were subsequently reburied in May 2003 at a private ceremony on the island in the presence of representatives of the descendant group who came from various parts of the United States and Canada (Cantwell 1992, 2000; Wall and Cantwell 2004). One of the views from the graves is of the tip of the island of Manhattan, just a short boat ride away. The name of that island is one of the few surviving relics of the seventeenth-century world that Pehanwitz and Wampage dominated. It is also a reminder of the countless Native New York stories yet to be uncovered and told.

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Chapter 3

A Manhattan *Hortus Medicus*?: Healing Herbs in Seventeenth-Century New Amsterdam

Richard G. Schaefer

Archaeologists and historians of New Amsterdam are fortunate to have at their disposal a remarkable visual source, known as the Castello Plan (Fig. 3.1). The existing copy of this 1660 bird's-eye view was made for Cosimo de' Medici III and rediscovered at the Villa Castello near Florence. The plan shows every building and street in the town, with elaborate gardens behind many of the structures. It is probable that the Castello Plan was copied with some degree of precision from an original survey of New Amsterdam drawn for the Dutch West India Company (WIC) by Jacques Cortelyou in 1660. An educated man and sworn land surveyor (Danckaerts 1913:57; Cohen and Augustyn 1997:40), Cortelyou had the training to create an accurate model. The number, size, and uniformity of the gardens do suggest the use of artistic conventions to fill in the map's empty spaces, however. On the other hand, it is known that the depiction of structures and lots is extremely accurate. It is also known from WIC records that too many inhabitants were involved in land speculation. People planted gardens and orchards, so that their properties were productive, and waited for land values to rise. The company directors complained that the "excessively large plots and gardens" took up space that should have been devoted to new dwellings for the growing population (Blackburn and Piwonka 1988:93; Cohen and Augustyn 1997:38–40).

The gardens of the Castello Plan are also plausible in that they show a similarity to contemporary Dutch garden designs (Schaefer and Janowitz 2005). An important source for seventeenth-century Dutch garden layout is *Den Nederlantsen Hovenier* (The Dutch gardener), a gardening manual first published in 1669 by Jan van der Groen, gardener to the Prince of Orange (Van der Groen 1669, 1988). Van der Groen, in his figures illustrating "A Dutch garden, and flower paterre," shows a garden with a cruciform pathway dividing it into four equal rectangles. One of these rectangles is a flower garden, with elaborately shaped decorative beds. The

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Fig. 3.1 The Castello Plan, believed to be a copy of Jacques Cortelyou's original 1660 bird's-eye-view of the New Amsterdam settlement. (Original map in the collection of the Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence, Italy). The Dutch title reads: Representation of the city of Amsterdam in New Netherland (Stokes 1915 (1):frontispiece)

remaining three rectangles form a kitchen garden, with beds of vegetables and herbs arranged in combinations of parallel rows (Van der Groen 1683:43, 1988:32). Using Van der Groen's layout for a simple Dutch garden as an interpretive key to the Castello Plan, the areas laid out with a central bed in a four-lobed floral shape would correspond to flower gardens.

Among the less-elaborate parterres depicted on the plan are those with paths surrounding diamond- or oval-shaped central beds, which probably indicate flower gardens, or possibly herb gardens. During the seventeenth century, the line between herbs appreciated for their utilitarian value and flowers prized for their aesthetic qualities was not so sharply drawn as today. Many of the herb garden plants to which seventeenth-century herbals attributed remarkable medical powers, such as hollyhock, roses, and irises (Nylandt 1683:40,153–154,264–265), are now generally grown for their beauty or perfume. In 1617, William Lawson, author of *The Country Housewife's Garden*, provided an aesthetic basis for this division. The kitchen/herb garden should be separate from the pleasure garden, because the former, yielding "daily Roots, and other herbs" suffers "deformity" (Lawson 1983:22).

The Castello Plan also shows gardens composed of rectangles with simple, parallel beds that are certainly kitchen or herb gardens, just as in Van der Groen's "Dutch Garden." They represent the sort of layout expected for a *hortus medicus*, or medicinal garden, and can be found throughout the New Amsterdam settlement.

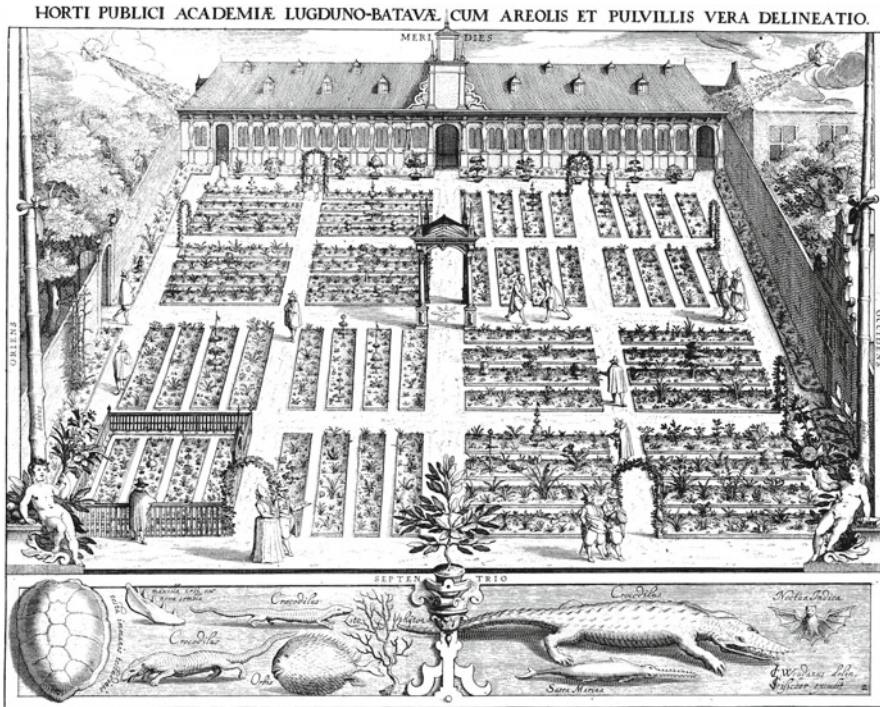


Fig. 3.2 View of the Leiden botanical garden in 1610. Note the simple, parallel beds. The structure at the far end of the garden housed rare plants and other curiosities from around the world, some of which are depicted along the bottom of the engraving (Engraving, J. W. Swanenburgh, after J. Cornelisz. Woudanus)

The establishment and maintenance of a *hortus medicus* by the University of Leiden at the end of the sixteenth century, and followed by the other cities of the United Provinces, was a practical investment for a municipality concerned with the welfare of its inhabitants. The cultivation of medicinal plants was necessary for supplying doctors, apothecaries, and surgeons with the medicines needed to practice their professions, but a *hortus medicus* also served as a visual teaching aid for both students and professionals. Unlike flower parterres, which change shape with fashion, medicinal and academic gardens, because of their utilitarian purpose, tend to be static in design. Even the most elaborate and famous academic botanical gardens—such as the Leiden Hortus (Fig. 3.2), which began as a *hortus medicus*, but was transformed into a full-fledged *hortus botanicus* (botanical garden) under the administration of the great Flemish botanist and physician Carolus Clusius (1526–1609, professor at Leiden from 1584)—were laid out in simple beds in parallel rows (De Jong 2000:122,135, figs. 151,152).

In a sense, these gardens were also dynamic, since in a research institution new plants were constantly being added and the organization refined. If not always aesthetically pleasing, the gardens were important to the townspeople, because they

were a source of their physical well-being. The gardens were also recreational in the sense that they were a sort of living book or encyclopedia through which one could stroll (De Jong 2000:129).

The individual plants were additionally instructive through the widely held belief in *signatures*, the notion that every plant has a human use of which God has provided some external indication. For example, the meat of walnuts looks like the surface of the brain, which indicates that it affects the brain and head. In the same vein, yellow plants were connected with the treatment of jaundice. Before the reader experiences too much amusement at the expense of the practitioners of folk medicine, it is ironic to note that the doctrine of signatures was spread by the *professional* medical community, which wrote the surviving texts. The research of modern folklorist and botanist Gabrielle Hatfield suggests that the connection between the ailment and the color or shape of the plant began as a mnemonic to help the often-illiterate practitioner remember which plant to use. Depending on the healer, a prayer or other ritual might accompany the treatment. Over centuries, the name of the specific plant intended was obscured or forgotten, the mnemonic remembered, and the ritual, if there were one, gradually came to be considered an essential part of the cure (Hatfield 1999:127–130,142–143).

Only by the late seventeenth century did many professional medical practitioners begin to reject the doctrine of signatures as unscientific, and whether rightly or wrongly, the use of *simples*, medicines made of common herbs and flowers, gradually fell into disrepute (Thomas 1983:84; Hunt 1990:187). It was still supported by the herbals, such as *Den Verstandigen Hovenier* (The intelligent gardener), a companion volume to Van der Groen's gardening guide, written by physician Peter Nylandt (1683). Nylandt lists numerous herbs, plants, and trees, their properties and medicinal uses. He also authored his own stand-alone herbal, *De Nederlandtse Herbarius of Kruydt-boeck* (The Dutch herbal or herb book), published in 1682.

Nylandt's works are part of a long line of international medical handbooks. Such works as Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife* (multiple editions from 1615 to 1631), more professional publications such as Nicholas Culpeper's *English Physitian Enlarged* (1653), and John Gerard's *Historie of Plants* (1597¹) tend to be recom compilations, translations, and reorganizations of earlier works extending back to the medieval period, and to Greek and Roman antiquity. Even illustrations were copied. As a result, many of the plant cures and uses compiled by German botanist and medical doctor Leonhart Fuchs in his beautifully illustrated *New Kreüterbuch* (New herbal) of 1543 are remarkably like those published by Culpeper, 110 years later, and by Nylandt another 30 years beyond that. Although the theory of signatures may not be explicitly stated, and even rejected by the author, signature-based remedies were still prescribed, as for example, *Saxifragia* (Nylandt 1682:118; Culpeper 1990:167; Markham 1994:134; Fuchs 2001:286).

¹ Gerard's *Historie of Plants* of 1597 was extensively corrected, revised, and expanded by Thomas Johnson, and republished in 1633, in what came to be its "standard" form (Gerard 1998:xvi).

The most important of these texts was that of Rembert Dodoens (1517–1585), Flemish physician and botanist, and professor of medicine at the University of Leiden from 1582. Dodoens's *Cruijdeboeck* (Herb Book) of 1554 contained so much medical information that it became a standard manual of herbal medicine, or *pharmacopoeia*, for centuries (Dodoens 1554). The work was translated into French by Clusius in 1557, appeared in English in 1578 (Lyte 1619),² and Dodoens's definitive edition was published in Latin in 1583. The text was extensively revised and expanded from about 800 to approximately 1,500 pages by 1644. Additions included plants such as tobacco, as well as a 129-page chapter entitled "Indian or foreign trees, shrubs and herbs," such as sugar, black pepper, and saffron—new plants encountered during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through expanding trade and exploration. The chapter was particularly indebted to the work of Clusius (Dodoens 1644:1,363–1,364).

In addition to the doctrine of signatures, a second theory of illness still important in the seventeenth century was derived from the ancient Greeks. It was based on the belief that all matter consists of four elements: earth, fire, air, and water; the elements' qualities: dryness, heat, cold, and wetness; and represented respectively in the four humors or fluids of the body: black bile, yellow bile (choler), phlegm, and blood. The humors were also believed to represent four temperaments: melancholic, choleric, sanguine, and phlegmatic. Mental and physical health were dependent on maintaining a balance between the humors, with different plants representing combinations of the desired qualities of dryness, heat, cold, and wetness (Sloan 1996:35–36). So, in addition to noting that dry walnuts cause headaches, Nylandt and Dodoens also rate various parts of the walnut tree as to their level of warmth and dryness. Nylandt writes that the fresh nuts are "warm in the first grade and dry in the second grade," although Dodoens declares the green nuts to be "somewhat cool and very moist" (Lyte 1619:526–527; Dodoens 1644:1,278; Nylandt 1683:55–56). Humoral theory considered tobacco to be hot and dry, so some practitioners prescribed the inhaling of tobacco smoke for asthma and other respiratory ailments caused by surplus phlegm, which was considered cold and wet (Culpeper 1990:177; Gerard 1998:93).

Some of Culpeper's elaborate recipes show why many laymen and even professionals continued to rely on the aptly named simples containing only a few herbal ingredients: price. Some professionally prepared cures might have over 40 components, including exotic spices, gemstones, minerals—literally gold, frankincense, and myrrh—and various animal fluids and parts (Culpeper 1990:251,254,322). The native plants required for folk cures were available free to anyone who could identify the ingredients, collect (or grow), and process them (Hatfield 1999:166–167). Often, in an age in which professional medicine relied on "laxatives, enemas, emetics and bleeding" to balance the humors, the patient was usually better off with cheap folk-derived cures. Not just an example of the acuity of hindsight, this position was held by the general public, as well as some physicians of the period (Nagy 1988:43–45,48,50,52).

² Gerard's *Historie* was an English translation of a later edition of Dodoens, with added commentary by Gerard (Gerard 1998:xv,xvii).

Like the town governments of the United Provinces, the Dutch WIC, despite its mercenary reputation, did take an interest in the health of its New Netherland employees and colonists. The company usually employed at least one medical man for the settlers and also kept midwives on the payroll. Before the English conquest in 1664, there were or had been at least five graduates of European medical schools resident in New Amsterdam. Perhaps the most important of these was Dr. Johannes La Montagne (ca. 1595–1670), who received his medical degree from the University of Leiden and arrived in New Netherland in 1637, but was more important as a member of the colony's council, and later served as vice director.

Most of the medical practitioners in the colony were barber-surgeons—men who had trained during an apprenticeship lasting from two to nine years (Bridenbaugh 1964:90–91; Sloan 1996:6–7; Shorto 2004:75). In seventeenth-century Europe, professional medical care was generally distributed among three groups of practitioners: physicians, apothecaries, and barber-surgeons. Physicians had university degrees and saw themselves as being in a supervisory role over the apothecaries and surgeons. They also prescribed medicines for internal consumption. Apothecaries prepared and sold the medicines. Surgeons treated external disorders such as wounds, breaks, and tumors, and performed surgery. In practice, there was a great deal of overlap between these professions, and the services an individual performed varied from town to town (Jütte 1989:189; Sloan 1996:2–7).

In general, only the affluent could afford a professional physician, and as a result there were very few of them in each town. For its population of 40,000 in 1628, the city of Haarlem had only nine. Some towns kept a physician on the municipal payroll to treat the poor for free, but in general, those desiring professional medical care utilized the services of barber-surgeons (Van Deursen 1991:237).

The surgeons' educations varied. In the Dutch countryside there was no regulation of surgeons and some had little or no training (Van Deursen 1991:237). Within the towns, each medical practitioner had his own guild, requiring apprenticeship to and practice under a master. Sometimes the barbers and surgeons were in the same guild and sometimes they were separate. In the seventeenth-century North Holland town of Graft the apprenticeship lasted 5 years. At the end of the apprenticeship, the candidate was permitted to take a test to be permitted to open his own barber-surgeon practice. This included demonstrating a proficiency in making bandages, preparing and applying a *cauterium potentiale*,³ making lancets, and dissecting part of a corpse. Oral examination may have followed and would have included questions regarding knowledge of veins and nerves (Venema 2003:128–129).

Ships' surgeons, as the lone medical men onboard—a position in which all the practicing New Netherland surgeons seem to have begun their careers—were forced to act as physician, surgeon, and apothecary (Sloan 1996:109). This is evident from the surgeon's chests of various periods that have been recovered from shipwrecks. From the Dutch ship *Amsterdam*, which sank in 1749, came

³ A cauterizing salve used to stop bleeding and burn away putrid tissue, as opposed to cauterization by hot metal implements.

parts of three enema syringes, including a narrow wooden nozzle, in addition to a number of white tin-glazed drug/ointment jars (Marsden 1985:128,153,159). The more complete surgeon's chest from the English *Mary Rose* (1545) held approximately 60 items, including turned wooden ointment canisters, wooden spatulas for applying or mixing ointment, stoneware medicine bottles with cork stoppers, a glass bottle, a pear-shaped wooden bottle with top identified as a feeding bottle, a possible trepan (T-shaped instrument for drilling the skull), a pewter canister, wooden bowls, and wooden handles for now-decayed metal surgical instruments. A separate chest, possibly that of an apothecary, contained a balance and weights, two wooden handles for small tools, as well as an octagonal wooden plate or mixing palette (Richards 1997:95,97,pl. 2D). Items believed to have belonged to the surgeon of the Spanish *San Diego* (1600) included two large albarelli, small lead weights, and several mortars and pestles. The missing metal instruments are amply illustrated in John Woodall's 1617 manual, *The Surgeion's Mate*, and included forceps, various cauterizing irons, trepans, and saws (Desroches et al. 1996:176–179).

The medicine and instrument assemblages represented by Woodall likely represent a level of completeness that few surgeons attained. Probably more typical was the ship's medicine chest from a seized Swedish vessel that the New Amsterdam authorities assessed at five guilders (1654). The chest could not have been very elaborate, since the same inventory gave that value to a crowbar (O'Callaghan 1856:2.16). Two surgeon's chests were noted in the 1665 probate inventory of Gysbert van Imbroch (also spelled Imborch, Imbroecke, Imbroecken, etc.) a surgeon at Esopus (now Kingston, New York), but the contents are not described. Other items relating to Van Imbroch's profession are recorded, including both a copper and white tin-glazed shaving bowl (possibly used for bleeding), an enema spout, three balances and weights, a barber's saw and grindstone, a glass with oil of juniper (a diuretic), a glass with a yellow medicine (Eekhof 1914:163–164; Van Buren 1923:139–140), a box with senna leaves (a strong laxative) and other herbs, a skin-iron (a cauterizing iron?), three medical syringes, a barber's case with instruments, a bottle with “purfumery and fumigating matter,” an iron mortar and stamper, a plate with eight razors and five pairs of scissors, a comb holder with five combs, a barber's chair, and a blue shaving towel (Versteeg 1976:567–570).

Van Imbroch was also quite a bibliophile, leaving a library that included 17 volumes identified as surgical texts or simply “*medecijn boeck*” (medicine book) (Eekhof 1914:163–164n).⁴ Noteworthy among these is an edition of Cornelis Herl's *Examen der Chyrurgie* (Examinations in surgery), the earliest Dutch-language surgery text, first printed in 1625. It covered the circulation of the blood and the dosing of purgatives, emetics, and opiates. The title page of the 1663 edition of the book described the contents as

⁴The identifiable authors include the famous French surgeon Ambrosius Paré (1517–1590); Giovanni de Vigo (1450–1525), the pope's personal surgeon; and what appears to be a translation into Dutch of Nicolaes Tulp's 1641 *Observationes Medicae* (Medical observations). The *medicijn boecken* were not limited to surgery, and the works of Christopher Wirtzung (ca. 1505–1570), and Quintus Apollinarem (Walter Hermann Ryff, active 1539–1549), included herbal remedies as well.

“for all young surgeons, very beneficial, and useful, especially those that are going to the East or West Indies”⁵ (Herl 1663). As the son-in-law of the affluent and influential Dr. La Montagne, Van Imbroch cannot be considered the average surgeon, but his library does suggest that some surgeons were much more than barbers.

In New Amsterdam itself there seems to have been no great discrimination between the two levels of medical practitioner. The barber-surgeons were given the honorific “Mr.” (*Meister*=Master), and the courts relied on a few of the more trusted surgeons for expert medical opinions in relevant cases.

One of the most respected was Jacob Hendricksz Varrevanger, a surgeon employed by the WIC from about 1647. He petitioned the company to establish a *gasthuys* or hospital for its sick soldiers and slaves. Varrevanger had identified an important loophole in the WIC company health care plan—the care of convalescents, especially soldiers and other company employees who did not have families in the colony. Varrevanger reported to Director-General Stuyvesant and the council in 1658:

that such sick people must suffer much through cold, inconveniences, and the dirtiness of the people who have taken the poor fellows into their houses, where bad smells and filth counteract all health-producing effects of the medicaments given by him, the surgeon. Death has been the result of it in several cases and more deaths will follow (Wilson 1892:298).

Varrevanger identified a suitable place near his own home for the hospital (the north side of Bridge Street between Whitehall and Broad Streets, (Fig. 3.3), and requested an attendant to assist the patients with fire, food, and light. Soldiers were to pay for care out of their own wages and rations, while the “Company Negroes” were treated at company expense, “or as advisable.” The company appointed a matron, Hillelje Wilbruch, in 1658, and built the tiny hospital in 1659 (Wilson 1892:298,300; Stokes 1916:260).

The WIC generally gave its physicians a set salary. According to memoranda in the 1638 minutes of the New Netherland Council, barber-surgeon Jan van Essendelft, working at a company outpost on the South (Delaware) River, was paid only *f*10 per month, or *f*120 per year (Van Laer 1974:4.14), at a time when the yearly wage of a skilled worker in the United Provinces was about *f*130 per year (Schama 1987:617). The salary may have been a commentary on Van Essendelft’s skills, since it was substantially below the salaries of lower level officers and master craftsmen, who were receiving from *f*20 to *f*40 per month, and on the same level as a quartermaster and an assistant gunner. Perhaps to compensate for the difference in wages between the New and Old Worlds, company employees in this salary tier also received living expenses of *f*100 per year, although this is not recorded with respect to Van Essendelft (Van Laer 1974:4.13–15). Based on a slightly later salary list, Dutch historian Jaap Jacobs places surgeons somewhere in the middle of the second level of company employees, beneath the schoolmaster, equivalent to the captain of a sloop and an assistant commissary, but above most craftsmen (Jacobs 2005:342–343).

⁵ “Alle jonge Chyrurgijns seer nut, endienstigh, insonderheyt die haer naer Oost-ofte West Indien begeben.”

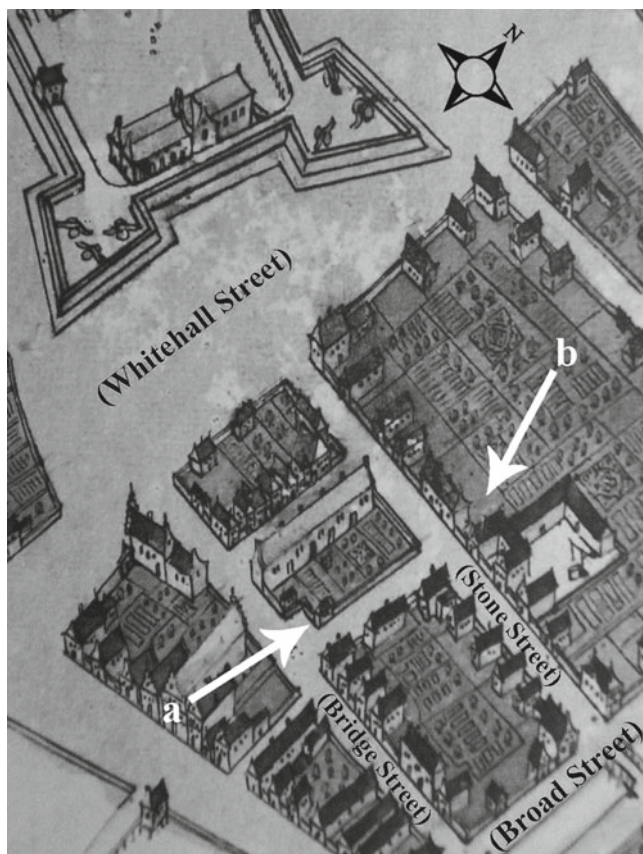


Fig. 3.3 Castello Plan, detail showing the blocks north of Pearl Street between Whitehall Street and Broad Street, (a) indicates the West India Company *gasthuys*, or hospital, (b) gives the location of Harmen Myndertsen van den Bogaert’s lot on the north side of Stone Street (Stokes 1916:C.pl.82c)

As today, fees varied by the reputation and experience of the practitioner. Often, when treating non-WIC personnel, the surgeons would charge for care over a long time period, usually a year. For Mr. Jacob Huges (or Vuges), a year’s worth of care seems to have ranged between *f*6 and *f*9⁶ (Fernow 1976:3.386,4.40). Huges fees were quite reasonable, as one patient complained that “his wife lay with a severe accident and agreed with him for [*f*8] a year, but Mr. Jacob [Huges] had not come to see after his wife; was therefore obliged to call Mr. Hans [Kierstede], to whom he must pay fully three times as much” (Fernow 1976:3.386). In specie-starved New Netherland, payment was often in kind, most popularly the guilder-equivalent in beaver pelts or sewan (wampum)⁷ (Fernow 1976:1.321,4.305,6.272).

⁶ Recorded in separate court cases as *f*9, and *f*8 in 1661, *f*6 11st in 1662.

⁷ Despite the “equivalency,” coins were more valuable: *f*1 sewant=*f*5/16 specie (Gehring and Schiltkamp 1987:xxix).

An examination of 20 years of surviving New Amsterdam court records (1653–1674) indicates a number of things about medical practice in the colony. Malpractice suits were few, and most of the lawsuits were filed against the *patients*, who failed or refused to pay for various reasons. Mr. Huges seems to have been particularly plagued by this (e.g., Fernow 1976:3.365–386), perhaps because his low fees attracted the people who were least able and likely to pay. Dr. La Montagne, on the other hand, does not appear in the court records at all, at least in reference to medical practice. Most of the medical cases recorded tend to be flesh wounds and bone breaks, the usual results of accidents (e.g., Van Laer 1974:1.263) and knife fights (Van Laer 1974:1.26, 92–93, 151–152). This is not surprising given the source of the information, but the incidents seem to have been rampant in a town in which a fourth of the buildings had become “houses for the sale of brandy, tobacco, or beer” (Brodhead 1853:487), and bans on fighting had to be repeated continually. As is the case with gunshot wounds today, New Netherland surgeons were required to question their patients and report suspicious cuts and stab wounds to the authorities (Jacobs 2005:451–452).

Unfortunately, although mention is made of “medicaments” prescribed, the particular medicines used in these cases are not mentioned. One of the saddest cases, although intriguing because it provides an above-average amount of information regarding the illness and treatment, was that of an enslaved African woman in September 1653 (Fernow 1976:1.362–363).

Nicolaes Boot purchased the woman from Teunis Kray, who was conducting her to Boot’s house from a ship just arrived from the West Indies. “[T]he said negress fell to the ground . . . whereupon she cried ‘Ariba.’ On standing up she could not well hold her feet, and was brought 10 to 12 paces farther on, when she again fell down; her eyes standing fixed in her head and something white being seen in her mouth.”

The carpenter of the ship came, and Boot asked him what was wrong with her. “[T]he negress then answered—‘More! More!’ which the carpenter rendered into Dutch, saying, the negress is drunk; it will soon pass away; she is sound at heart.”

Boot asked Mr. Jacob Huges to come to his house; about 3 or 4 p.m. “[H]e, as a surgeon felt for the pulse, and there distinguishing no pulse at all; yea no more than a dead man; he said to Boot’s wife, that she must prepare some sugarsops, and see if the negress would swallow some, and give her something else, when he should further prescribe.”

Huges had no further chance at treatment. He was called again at 9 p.m. “On arriving there he found her very low. She died immediately, within half an hour in their hands.” Nicolaes Boot sued both Teunis Kray and Mr. Huges, but the outcome of the case is not recorded.

The court records describe no other prescription or treatment, aside from the sugar sops, which according to the 1811 *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* are “[t]oasted bread soked in ale, sweetened with sugar, and grated nutmeg: it is eaten with cheese” (Grose 1811). Although sugar had long been recognized as a stimulant, and Dodoens declares it to be “extremely good in food or drink . . . for the sick as well as the healthy” (Dodoens 1644:1,384), the recipe appears to be a snack rather than a medication. This suggests that Huges thought the woman was suffering from lack

of food or exhaustion. On the other hand, sugar sops may be a seventeenth-century hangover remedy.

Another medicine appears in the documentary record in 1652, when the barber-surgeons of New Amsterdam petitioned Stuyvesant and the council about unauthorized medical practitioners. “Three such practitioners are known to have made pills and sold Vienna drink,” they complained. Historian James Grant Wilson described Vienna drink as made from rhubarb and senna steeped in port wine (Wilson 1892:298). Modern pharmacological analyses indicate that senna was a powerful laxative. Senna, from the genus *Cassia*, of which *Cassia marilandica* is a native American species, is a member of the pea family. The rhubarb and wine are omitted in the modern formulations, but diluted alcohol actually helps to extract senna’s laxative properties, and also removes its nauseous odor and taste (Remington 1918:s.v. Senna). The 1644 edition of Dodoens notes that rhubarb is a gentle laxative, and more importantly, served to relieve cramps in the stomach, kidneys, and liver (Dodoens 1644:637), a powerful side effect of senna. In 1673, surgeon Hans Kierstede successfully employed rhubarb and senna leaves in the treatment of Hendrik de Zeewanrijger,⁸ who was suffering from a stab wound in the abdomen, and apparently had been unable to relieve himself (Eekhof 1914:166).⁹ Concoctions of rhubarb, senna, and several other herbs steeped in ale seem to have been considered a health drink, good for both the healthy and infirm. Gerard wrote that the recipe “purifieth the bloud and makes yong wenches look faire and cherry-like” (Gerard 1998:99–100).

The prominence of a powerful laxative fit in well with the practice of humoral medicine, which sought to return the body to its natural balance of humors by purging of the body of one or another of its fluids. Barber-surgeons also used more direct means, namely bleeding. The practice is mentioned early in New Netherland history (1623), when Jan Price, the barber-surgeon on board the ship *Maeckereel*—the first recorded WIC ship to visit New Netherland—bled some of the Indians in exchange for animal pelts (Condon 1968:153; Bachman 1969:52n).

Barber bowls, large basins placed under the chin of a customer, and with a cut-out rim to accommodate the neck, were not just adjuncts to shaving, but could also be used in bleeding patients. Both a copper- and a tin-glazed earthenware example have already been noted in the Van Imbroch inventory.

An artifact unambiguously associated with the infirm is the bedpan, called a *bed-depan* or *ondersteek* in Dutch. It would have been employed by those too sick to leave bed and use the chamberpot or outhouse. None have yet been identified in New Netherland. The late seventeenth-century, lead-glazed white earthenware example shown in Fig. 3.4 was recovered in Amsterdam (Schaefer 1998:95,145). Note the smooth edges to prevent it from snagging on bedclothes as it was pushed under the patient, the folded-in rim to prevent spillage, and the handle that doubles as a pouring spout.

⁸ Literally, Hendrik the sewan (wampum) stringer, that is, a man who strings sewan beads.

⁹ Unfortunately, recovery was not proceeding quickly enough for Hendrik’s friends, and they gave him a half-pint of goat’s blood to drink. He died the next morning (Eekhof 1914:166).

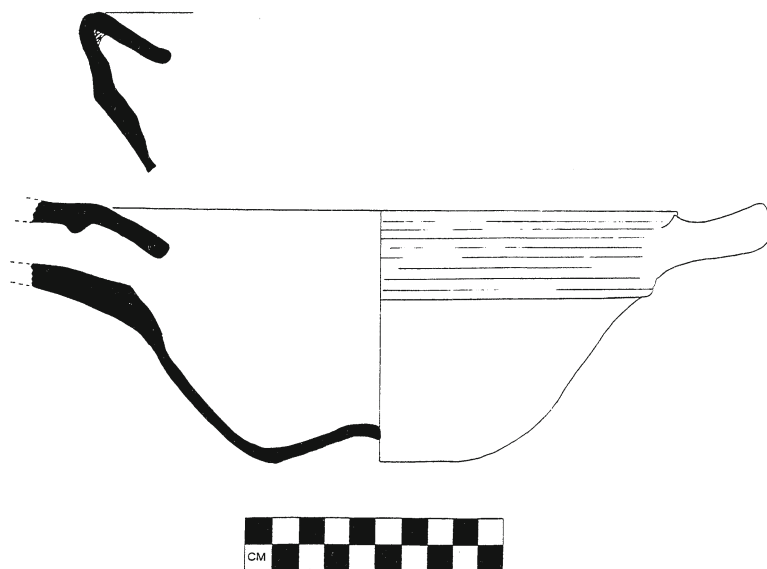


Fig. 3.4 A Dutch seventeenth-century *beddepan* (bedpan), white earthenware with lead glaze, horizontal ear handle (right), hollow rod handle, which also served as a spout (left) has broken off. Excavated in Amsterdam (Taanstraat BP3 A-8). (Drawing by author)

Another artifact is the ointment jar, or *zalfpot* (Fig. 3.5). A number of these have been recovered in the Hudson Valley (Huey 1988:417–418,714,717) and may have contained medicines or even cosmetics. They were made in utilitarian red or white earthenware, or in more expensive white tin-glazed earthenware (Fig. 3.5a, b). The latter form is related to the traditional apothecary’s drug jar, known as an *albarello*, which is still manufactured today, although more for its decorative character than for holding medicines. The constricted neck and flaring lip of this family of containers make it possible to seal the container with a piece of parchment or bladder tied with a string.

Written records make some mention of medicines being imported from Europe, with the most detailed list from a shipment of medicines sent in 1663. Stuyvesant ordered the shipment for an “English preacher¹⁰ versed in the art of Physick and willing to serve in the capacity of Physician” (Singleton 1909:241). The organic entries on the list included 3 lb of white and 3 lb of black hellebore root (*Helleborus albi* and *H. niger*, commonly known as the Lenten and Christmas rose), 1 lb of opium, and 19.5 lb of oil of terebinth (turpentine, from *Pistacia terebinthus*, a European tree) (Eekhof 1914:165n). In general, pharmaceutical oils were used in various combinations as plasters and healing lotions for swellings and wounds. Not only did this require the proper medicinal herbs and the necessary distilling appara-

¹⁰ Singleton (1909:241) suggests this refers to Rev. William Leverich.

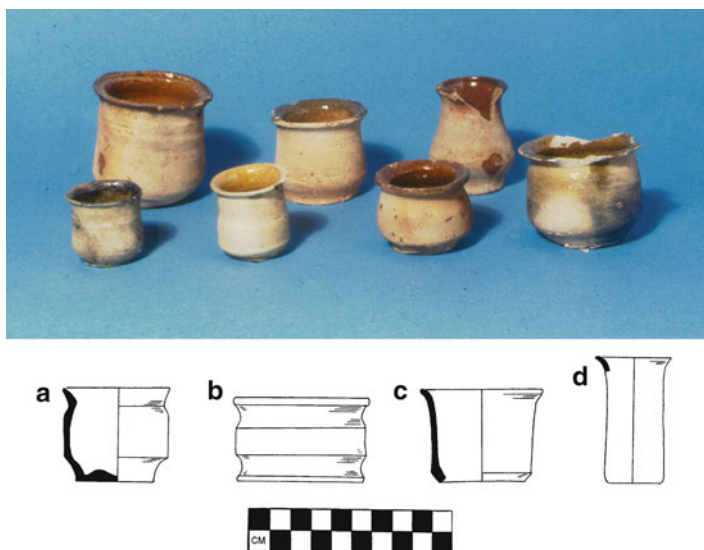


Fig. 3.5 Top: Seven Dutch earthenware *zalfpotten* (ointment pots), unglazed exterior, lead-glazed interior, ca. 1600–1625. Excavated in Amsterdam. Bottom: (a) Tin-glazed (faïence) earthenware *zalfpot*, albarello form, excavated in Amsterdam (Ph-152 BP-16); (b) Tin-glazed (faïence) earthenware *zalfpot*, wide form ca. 1650–1700, excavated in Amsterdam, drawing after Baart et al. (1977:fig. 534); (c) White earthenware *zalfpot*, unglazed exterior, lead-glazed interior, excavated in Amsterdam (Taanstraat BP1 A-1); (d) Grey stoneware *zalfpot*, coagulated salt glaze with black specks, excavated in Amsterdam (Taanstraat BP5 A-10). (Drawings and photograph by author)

tus, but also an experienced distiller/herbalist. The glass distillation equipment had to be ordered from the Netherlands, and securing the herbalist was even more problematic, because “[p]ersons of such great qualities are very rare, even in the Netherlands, and seldom travel to the Indies” (Michel and Werger-Klein 2004:465–467). This last piece of information explains the reason Stuyvesant went out of his way for an *English* preacher, when there were surgeons and even a university-trained physician resident in the colony. The Englishman had expertise in distilling. In addition to the medical supplies, the order lists sections of an alembic or distilling apparatus, including ten glass retorts, four large and three smaller glass receivers, and three glass heads (Eekhof 1914:165n).

In spite of these activities, the WIC does not seem to have provided medicines in sufficient quantities. The need in New Netherland was more acute than we may realize, considering that most of the plants comprising European remedies did not grow wild in the New World. In 1654, the company compensated Mr. Varrevanger, then a former employee, for importing medicines from Holland at his own expense since 1652 (Gehring 1983:146). If the surgeons’ medicinal requirements were not provided by the company, it is probable that they grew the plants themselves or got them from other colonists. Documentary evidence associates only two medical practitioners with the cultivation of healing plants.

In September 1659, Stuyvesant requested that the company directors send over “some medicinal seeds and plants” for cultivation in New Amsterdam. The directors answered in December that “the seed would be ordered from the Hortus at Leyden and would be sent herewith” (Bangs 1912:11; Stokes 1922:199,201). The seeds were to be the charge of the newly arrived rector of the Latin School, Alexander Carolus Curtius, a “professor in Lithuania,” who also practiced as a physician (Brodhead 1853:656). In 1660, the directors wrote, “As we are told, that Rector Curtius practices medicine there and therefore asked to have an herbal sent to him, we have been willing to provide him with one herewith, you will hand it to him with the understanding, that it shall not cease to be the property of the Company” (Brodhead 1853:694; Stokes 1922:205).

The logical places for the location of this New Amsterdam *hortus medicus* would be on the lot of the rector’s house, which—if the Castello Plan is consulted—seems to be an unplanted courtyard with a well, near the northwest corner of Broad Street and Exchange Alley; or the extensive WIC Gardens on the west side of Broadway north of Exchange Alley, laid out along the Hudson River in 1638 (Fig. 3.6). A number of parterres of all types are depicted in the WIC Gardens, and it is plausible that at least one small section served as a medicinal garden. Clusius’s famous garden at Leiden was quite small, only about 115 × 130 ft. (De Jong 2000:135), so size was probably not a constraint. This location would fit in well with the company’s apparently paternal intentions, i.e., to furnish the land for the *hortus medicus*, and at the same time retain possession of the hortus (and the herbal reference book), so that it could be maintained should the medical practitioner depart company service, as Curtius was soon to do in 1661.

At least one private medicinal garden also existed. In his *Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederlant* (Description of New Netherland), Adriaen van der Donck wrote that “a certain surgeon had made a very beautiful garden / and also he was a botanist / many medicinal things from the wild were planted there.” Van der Donck then presents a list of “healing herbs,” in addition to unnamed native herbs and trees, “among which there undoubtedly are good simples” (Van der Donck 1656:24, 1968:28).

In order to determine where this private *hortus medicus* may have been, it is first necessary to determine the identity of the surgeon. The best candidate is Harmen Myndertsen van den Bogaert (1612–1648), who had presumably served an apprenticeship as a barber-surgeon, arriving in New Netherland in May 1631 as the surgeon of the ship *De Eendracht* (Brodhead 1853:419; Van Laer 1974:1.271–272).¹¹ He was employed by the WIC in a number of positions, most importantly as leader of an important trade and diplomatic mission to the Mohawk Indians in 1634, at the ripe old age of 22. It is not clear why the company chose him as one of the three men on the mission. It may have been because he was able to communicate in the Mohawk language, but apparently was neither fluent nor particularly knowledgeable. According to Dominie Megapolensis, Bogaert said “that he was of the opinion that the Indians changed their language every 2 or 3 years” (Jacobs 2005:28). As a

¹¹ A popular, dramatic account of Bogaert’s history has been published by Russell Shorto (2004).

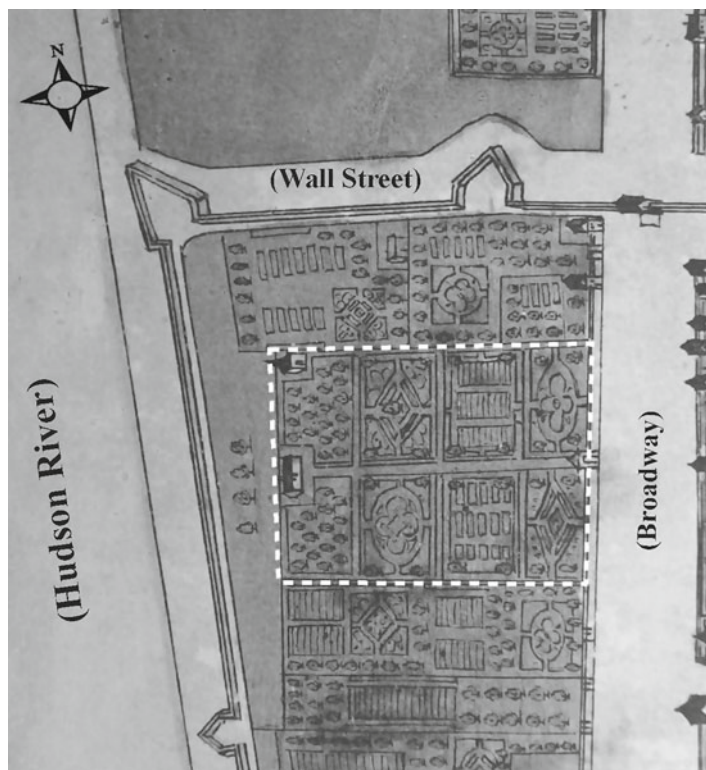


Fig. 3.6 Castello Plan, detail showing Broadway south of Wall Street. The white broken line gives the approximate boundaries of the Dutch West India Company Gardens, possible site of a company *hortus medicus* (Stokes 1916:C.pl.82b)

barber-surgeon he had a certain status among the Indians, who respected healers and were apparently not unaware of his training (Meuwese 2003:142–143), since he was specially invited to view healing rituals on at least two occasions (Gehring and Starna 1988:17–18).

Perhaps seeking additional excitement, in 1638 Bogaert sailed on a privateering mission against the Spanish in the West Indies. The ship was the frigate *La Garce*, of which he was a partial owner (Gehring and Starna 1988:xxi). Later, from August to September 1639 he served as supercargo on the yacht *Canarivogel*. Even after his seafaring career was over, probably not coincidental with his marriage to Jelisjen (or Gelisje) Swits in 1639, he acquired additional shares in *La Garce* in 1647 (Van Laer 1974:3.436–437, 4.59).

In 1640 he was appointed commissary of stores on Manhattan, but in 1645 went back north to serve as commissary at Fort Orange (Brodhead 1853:419,491; Gehring and Starna 1988:xxi). Although Bogaert obtained official title to a plot of land on Stone Street in New Amsterdam in 1647 (Fig. 3.3) (Stokes 1916:251, 1922:109), he is noted as owner by September 1645 (Gehring 1980:30), and New Amsterdam

historian J. H. Innes also reports that Bogaert was living there by 1645 (Innes 1902:68–69). The lot itself had an 85.5 ft. frontage on Stone Street, and extended between 135 and 150 ft. into the center of the block, narrowing to 66.5 ft. (Gehring 1980:53), but there seems to be no mention of a house, although one appears there on the Castello Plan in ca.1660.

While in New Amsterdam, Bogaert's one recorded court appearance as an expert medical witness occurred on 11 April 1643, when he gave his opinion that Philip Gerardy's wound was not fatal "at present" (Van Laer 1974:3.112–113).

Bogaert and his wife produced two sons and two daughters, and the couple appears to have been fairly prosperous. Following the 1641 death of his father-in-law, Claes Cornelissen Swits, Bogaert inherited Swits's plantation along the East River in the present Turtle Bay section of Manhattan, which he sold for 160 Carolus guilders (Van Laer 1974:3.40–41).

Bogaert came to a sad end in early 1648. While at Fort Orange he was caught in flagrante with Tobias, a male African slave owned by the company. Bogaert escaped by fleeing into Indian territory, fortifying himself in a Mohawk long-house. The building was set afire, destroying a large quantity of pelts, wampum, and grain stored there for the winter. Bogaert was captured. His offense was considered so heinous that Stuyvesant decided to sit in judgment himself, even though it was necessary to wait until spring so that he could make his way up the iced-over Hudson from Manhattan. Bogaert managed to escape again, and in the pursuit across the frozen river, the ice broke and he drowned (Gehring and Starna 1988:xxi–xxii).

Stuyvesant compensated the angry Mohawk with the proceeds of the sale of Bogaert's "garden" (Innes 1902:71; Huey 1988:48), but this possibly refers to the lack of a dwelling there, rather than a lot in cultivation. No trace of a possible Bogaert *hortus medicus* remains to be shown on the Castello Plan, which depicts the location more than a decade later.

What scholars do have is the list of 42 healing herbs that Van der Donck recorded as present in New Netherland. Van der Donck was well educated, a lawyer with multiple degrees from the University of Leiden. He was not a botanist, however, which is evident from the punctuation and spelling of his list of healing herbs, and unless the errors can be attributed solely to the printer, it suggests that Van der Donck was not the original compiler. The healing herb list was published in at least three different works claiming to describe New Netherland. The earliest was the *Vertoogh van Nieu-Neder-land* (Remonstrance of New Netherland), which was published under Van der Donck's name in the Hague in 1650 (Van der Donck 1650):

Capilli veneris, Scholopentria, Angelica, Polupodium, Verbascum, Album Calceus facensores, vel Marie catriplex, Hortense&Marine, Chortium turites, Calannis, Arromaticus sassafrax coeis Virginarium, Rarunculus, Planfago, Bursa Pastoris, Malva, Origanum Genanium althea, Cineroton, Pseuto Daphne, Viola, Ireas, Indigo, Silvestris, Sigillum Solomonis, Sanguis Draconium, Consolida, Mille foluum, veelderhande soorte van varen / verscheyde wilde Lelyen / Agrimonium, wilde Loock / Carde-benedictus, Serpentaria, Spaensche-vyghen die aende Bladers uytgroeyen / Arragon, ende heel veel andere planten en Bloemmen (Van der Donck 1650:7).

The *Remonstrance* was originally written and sent to the States General of the United Provinces in July 1649 as a list of complaints against Peter Stuyvesant and the mismanagement of the colony. Van der Donck was one of 11 signers (Van der Donck 1968:31–35).

The healing herb list was next published in Joost Hartgers's *Beschrijvinghe van Virginia, Nieuw Nederlandt, Nieuw Engelandt*, etc. (Description of Virginia, New Netherland, New England, etc.), which appeared in Amsterdam in 1651, but like the *Remonstrance* describes conditions in 1649. Hartgers either employs the *Remonstrance* list, or the same source that Van der Donck used, with slightly altered spelling and punctuation (Hartgers 1651:28). Van der Donck's own *Description*, first published in 1655, was an expanded version of the *Remonstrance*, and the list is expanded as well, with six additional plants: "Noli Metanghere," "Coriander, leke Pollen," and "Elaetine, Camperfoelie, Petum, manneken en wijfken" (Van der Donck 1656:24, 1968; O'Callaghan 1856:I.279).

The latest date on which the list could have been composed was July 1649, and if Van der Donck is discussing Bogaert's garden, the list dates to less than a year and a half after Bogaert's death in early 1648. Van der Donck tactfully concludes his account of the medicinal garden by writing, "unfortunately, the owner has removed and the garden lies neglected" (Van der Donck 1968:28). Since gardens are quite ephemeral, this short period of time without its gardener would fit the criterion of neglect.

Each of the healing herbs on Van der Donck's list, down to the familiar irises, lilies, and violas, had a medicinal use according to Nylandt and the various editions of Dodoens. It is interesting to note that of the 20 plants that Dr. Nylandt's "Dutch gardener" recommended for planting in a medicinal garden,¹² the two lists have only four plants in common, i.e., blessed thistle (*Cardobenedictus*), angelica (*Angelica archangelica*), and two members of the mallow family, mallow (*Malva*) and the white or marsh mallow (*Althaea*). All were European natives, and would have been purposely imported and cultivated at New Amsterdam (Van der Donck 1650, 1656, 1968:28; Nylandt 1683).

The blessed thistle, now considered something of a weed, was then still appreciated for its medicinal powers. Among other uses, according to the herbals, the leaves boiled in wine and drunk provoke sweat and urine, and so were good for stomach cramps, removing internal blockages like gallstones, purging phlegm in the stomach and breast, promoting easier breathing, and "the natural sickness of women." A nutshell of the powder could cure the plague. The juice was a cure for all poisons, and the green herb for the bites of snakes, spiders, and scorpions, and for swellings, sores, and blotches (Dodoens 1554:569–570, 1644:1,154–1,555; Lyte 1619:383–384; Nylandt 1682:168–169).

Van der Donck lists numerous modern culinary herbs, fruits, and vegetables, such as figs, leeks, coriander, oregano or marjoram, and angelica. For some of these,

¹² Angelica, Aloë, Byvoet, Camillen, Carde Benedict, Centaurea, Galligan, Gentian, Haselwortel, Heemstwortel (Althea), Holwortel (Corydalis), Hipericon, Lepelbladen, Malve/Pappelen, Schelkruyt, Sinnau, Wintergroen, and Walwortel (Nylandt 1683).

their culinary importance was still secondary to their medicinal use. Presently, the candied stems of angelica are used in cake decoration, but the root of angelica was then considered an antidote to all poisons, driving them out by supposedly encouraging perspiration and urination. Among other benefits, angelica root was also believed to cure and provide protection from the plague, improve the appetite, and along with the leaves act as a general disinfectant, especially to cleanse wounds and heal bites from bees, snakes, and mad dogs. A cure for the plague consisted of powdered angelica root mixed into the distilled water of the blessed thistle. This was the summer recipe—the winter version was mixed into wine (Dodoens 1554:139, 1644:512–513; Lyte 1619:212; Nylandt 1682:290–291).

A number of familiar flowers were also still found among the healing herbs, including irises (“ireas”), violets, and two forms of mallow, the mallow (*Malva*) and white or marsh mallow (*Althaea*). The marsh mallow was recommended for all pains of the body, including kidney stones, sciatica, cramps, and toothaches, and for bloody diarrhea, coughs, various problems of the skin, such as sores, roughness, tumors, swellings, and even facial spots and freckles. The leaves were used to heal burns, scalds, the bites of dogs, new wounds, and bee and wasp stings. The mucilaginous quality of the roots was approved for creating salves and plasters (Dodoens 1554:621–623, 1644:1,022; Lyte 1619:419).

Mallow, of both wild and garden (hollyhock) varieties, had similar qualities to the marsh mallow. Among other uses, drinking the broth made from the root and leaves would cause vomiting as a remedy for all venoms and poison, while bathing in the broth was prescribed for hardness of the womb. Administered with a clyster it treated the ulceration and roughness of the bladder, womb, and anal tract. The seeds with wine were believed to increase the milk production of nursing mothers. Malva leaves could be used for wasp, bee, and scorpion stings, spider bites, and to draw out thorns and splinters. The roots roasted in ashes and pounded into a paste were recommended as a plaster to relieve the soreness of women’s breasts (Dodoens 1554:618–620, 1644:1,017–1,021; Lyte 1619:416–418).

It is notable that Van der Donck’s list includes only three identifiable plants native to eastern North America.¹³ Two of these, sassafras (*Sassifrax*) and “petum,” had been introduced into Europe at the end of the sixteenth century, and their characteristics and uses were already published in seventeenth-century herbals (Dodoens 1644:739–742, 1,463; Nylandt 1682:212–214).

Sassafras, an unruly shrub in the northern United States, was introduced into Europe by Spanish explorers, and sassafras tea became vastly popular in Europe as a cure-all, even being sold from street stalls in England. It was believed to strengthen the stomach, liver, and bowels, and be useful for all sicknesses involving internal stoppages or obstructions, such as jaundice. The 1644 edition of Dodoens noted that it was “most used” as a cure for syphilis. Not surprisingly, this caused the public drinking of sassafras tea to fall from fashion (Dodoens 1644:1,463; Lehner and Lehner 1962:112).

¹³ “Identifiable” is the operative term here, since *Rois Virginarium*, obviously a New World native, may be the Virginia rose, or it has been suggested that “Rois” may be *Rhus*, and therefore a species of sumach.

Petum or petun, words taken from an indigenous South American language via Portuguese, is tobacco. Tobacco was another perceived cure-all, believed to relieve everything from labor pains to bad breath, and to protect against the plague. The juice and leaves were used for wounds as a purgative. As noted earlier, the inhaling of the smoke was believed by some to help cure asthma and other respiratory ailments (Culpeper 1990:177), although many in the medical professions were already either skeptical of the benefits of tobacco smoke or wary of its abuse. Some tended to rely more on the juice from the leaves and roots (Dodoens 1644:740–742; Gerard 1998:93), while others were openly hostile to the plant's use, and a large body of anti-tobacco literature appeared during the seventeenth century (e.g., Paulli 1746 [1665]).

Like the unidentified wild lilies and ferns, which Van der Donck mentions in passing, the third American plant which he calls “Serpentaria” (*Aristolochia serpentaria*) and “Slange-kruyt” (snake-herb) (Van der Donck 1650:8, 1656:45) would have been familiar and unthreatening to Europeans because several close relatives of this plant were European natives, namely *A. longa* and *A. rotunda*. There is a certain level of confusion in the herbals regarding the members of this genus (e.g., Fuchs 2001:XXXI). Nylandt includes what he calls “Hol-wortel,” or *Aristolochia fabacea*, in his list of medicinal herbs (Nylandt 1682, 1683:212), but other publications recognized it as a distinctly different plant, today known as *Corydalis cava* (Dodoens 1554:352, 1644:524–527; Lyte 1619:228).

From Van der Donck's designations serpentaria and snake-herb, and the common English name Virginia snakeroot, it is fairly obvious that the plant was used to cure the bites of snakes and other poisonous animals. Dodoens and Nylandt both describe the treatment, effected by placing *Aristolochia* root on the wound or drinking the root in wine (Dodoens 1554:350, 1644:523; Lyte 1619:227; Nylandt 1683:212). What is interesting about the Virginia snakeroot is that European colonists seem to have adopted its use from observing the Indians.

In the *Remonstrance*, Van der Donck mentions serpentaria in connection with his description of rattlesnakes:

This snake is very malignant and not inclined to retreat before a man or any other creature. Whoever is bit by one runs great risk of his life, if not immediately attended to; but the best of it is, they are not numerous; and the true Serpentaria grows spontaneously here, which is very highly prized by the Indians, as being an unfailling cure (O'Callaghan 1856:1.279).

In his *Description*, he notes that “many of them [the Indians] always carry some of it, well dried, with them to cure the bites of those serpents” (Van der Donck 1968:58). Travelers and colonists from New England to North Carolina reported Native Americans chewing or mashing snakeroot and spitting or placing it on snakebites. Since the root also promoted sweating, Indians used it to treat fevers, among other ailments (Vogel 1970:51,373–374). Modern herbals describe it as a fast-acting “pure stimulant whose action is mainly employed in diverting the flow of blood outward, hence its “great reputation for snakebites” when taken internally (Hutchens 1989:289–290).

Van der Donck (1656:69) assures his readers that there must be many native healing herbs, but does not name them, and declares that “with herbs, roots, leaves

and suchlike that the land gives them, and of which they know the powers, without making compounds"¹⁴ they cure everything from ulcers to wounds to venereal disease. In what may be an additional backhanded swipe at European medical practices, he notes that they "also do not esteem medicines and purgatives."¹⁵ The more acute illnesses were treated by fasting and use of the sweat lodge. If these failed, they resorted to consulting what Van der Donck refers to as "the Devil," but he is surprisingly unjudgmental in this regard (Van der Donck 1656:69, 1968:95). This is possibly due to the fact that the *Description* was intended to encourage Netherlanders to emigrate to New Netherland rather than frighten them away.

If the private *hortus medicus* were Bogaert's, one might expect more native American plants on the list, considering his Indian contacts. Of interest is the Mohawk wordlist appended to the journal of his 1634 trade expedition into Mohawk and Oneida country (Gehring and Starna 1988:52–63). As expected, most entries are words used in commerce, such as "kettles," "beaver," "to trade," and "sewan," but historian Marcus Meuwese (2003:121,131*n*) has noted that a number of the words are related to Bogaert's medical background. The list includes Mohawk terms for "sick," "death," "woman in labor/pregnant woman," "to make medicine," "to heal," and 19 terms for parts of the body from "head" to "feet" (Gehring and Starna 1988:52–63). This suggests that he took some interest in Indian healing methods. Bogaert also records viewing at least two Indian medical procedures. Near the end of the first he seems to have fled the house to avoid being struck by hot ashes and embers that were being flung about. The second involved a great deal of perspiration accompanied by singing, clapping, and dancing. It culminated with the two Mohawk doctors vomiting all over the sick man's body. Bogaert did not marvel at the Indian's herbal prowess as did Van der Donck, but he also did not condemn the rituals (Gehring and Starna 1988:10,17–18).

Although the documentary evidence is clear that there was at least one *hortus medicus* in New Amsterdam, the available archaeological evidence of New Amsterdam gardens in general is practically nonexistent. This is due to a combination of factors, mainly the shallow nature of garden remains, and the intensive construction episodes that have taken place in Lower Manhattan. The possibility of data recovery from the two prime locations identified for the *hortus medicus* is unlikely because of the deep foundations of existing buildings. The site of the WIC Gardens, on the west side of Broadway between Wall Street and Exchange Place, is presently beneath three office buildings of between 21 and 33 stories. Similarly, Bogaert's garden plot, on the north side of Stone Street between Whitehall and Broad Streets, is occupied by an 8- to 32-story building with an underground parking garage (Sanborn Map Company 2003).

In general, a possible archaeological survivor would be the remains of flowerpots (Fig. 3.7). A noted component of seventeenth-century Dutch garden layout, flower

¹⁴"met Kryden Wortelen/ Bladen en diergelijcke dat het Landt haer gheeft/ en sy de krachten van kennen/ zonder compositen te maecken"

¹⁵"houdenooch van geen *Medicineren* en *Purgeren*"

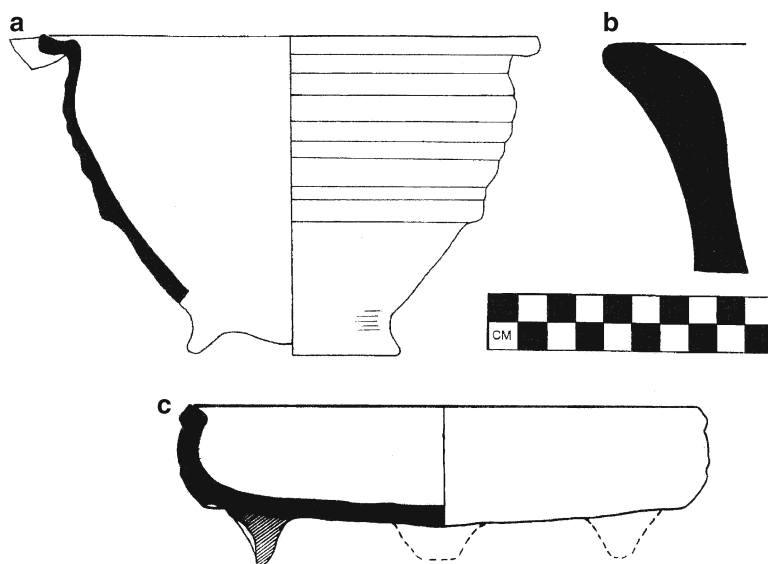


Fig. 3.7 (a) *Bloempot* (flowerpot), seventeenth century, red earthenware, unglazed, stump of an ear handle at the rim, drainage holes in base. Excavated in Amsterdam (Taanstraat BP1 A-1); (b) *Bloempot* (flowerpot), seventeenth century, red earthenware, lead glaze. This large (d. approx. 45 cm, ht. 33 cm), baseless planter, a product of the Croonenburgh pottery in Bergen op Zoom, the Netherlands, was manufactured in four sections, each with a decorative handle, and most likely intended to be sunk into the ground to hold a shrub or small tree; (c) Flowerpot “saucer,” seventeenth century, unglazed red earthenware, with three shell-shaped lobe feet. Excavated in Amsterdam (OZA A-30). (Drawings by author)

pots and tubs were set out in the planting beds in the spring and taken indoors for the winter. Ceramic vessels could range from elaborate classically inspired urns to small, unglazed red-earthenware pots. The latter would have been useful indoors for providing fresh herbs during the winter months both for culinary and medicinal use, and were produced by some Dutch potteries during the seventeenth century. They appear occasionally both in Dutch art and in the ceramic assemblages from Dutch domestic sites, suggesting that they were not just the province of the affluent (Oldenburger-Ebbers 1990:169; Groeneweg 1992:s.v. bloempot; Schaefer 1998:85–86,141). None have been identified from New Amsterdam, however, and even in the Netherlands itself, they tend to be few and far between, at least in seventeenth-century domestic contexts (see e.g., for the towns of Nijmegen, Kampen, and Deventer, respectively: Clevis and Kottman 1989; Clevis and Smit 1990; Thijssen 1991; there are others). The heyday of the domestic flowerpot had to wait until the eighteenth century (Richards 1999:116–119).

Van der Donck’s plant list records the presence of “Spaensche-vyghen” (“Spanish figs” in Nylandt 1682:19), which by his description are actually Indian figs. The plants would have needed some sort of winter protection. This could have been easily accomplished by wrapping the dormant plant or bringing it indoors. On the other

hand, most of the tropical plants that would have been planted in tubs, such as aloes and citrus fruits, required the construction of a special orangery or hothouse, something expensive to maintain even in the Netherlands itself (Oldenburger-Ebbers 1990:164–166). Such an unusual construction in New Netherland would not have gone unnoticed, but there is no record of one being built. Furthermore, wooden tubs would not be likely to survive in the archaeological record, and if they did, chances are that their use as planters would not be discernable.

Another possible source of information is from seeds and pollen preserved in undisturbed seventeenth-century contexts. Unfortunately, of the few excavated sites on Manhattan which fall within the geographical and chronological boundaries under discussion, seeds were analyzed only on the Broad Street site, the location of the WIC warehouse. For various reasons, about half the seeds recovered could not be identified at the time (Greenhouse Consultants 1985:X-30). Of the identified seeds from the context of 1640, half were European fruit pits, and another 45 were classified as “weeds.” The main “weed” identified was purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*), a prized European salad green and medicinal plant, which may have been purposely planted by colonists, or because of its invasiveness, accidentally introduced. It is common on historical archaeological sites in the eastern United States (Raymer 2004:159), and thus its presence is inconclusive. Samuel de Champlain noted it in Quebec before the 1630s, where the Native Americans, who had no use for it, were futilely attempting to weed it out of their maize patches (Hylton 1974:542).

This discussion has only begun to tap the wealth of documentary information regarding medical practice in New Netherland, and in New Amsterdam in particular. Unfortunately, researchers must await the completion of future archaeological excavations in order to supplement the existing evidence, and bring it to life in the unique way that only archaeology can. It is hoped that this data is still preserved somewhere beneath the streets and buildings of Manhattan and other parts of New Netherland, awaiting the archaeologist’s trowel.

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Part II
Dutch Women in an English Colony

Chapter 4

Dutch Women in an English Colony, Historical Background

Meta F. Janowitz and Diane Dallal

New Netherland's existence as a Dutch-controlled colony was interrupted in 1664 when, as part of Dutch-English worldwide trading rivalries, an English force sent by James, Duke of York, brother of King Charles II, sailed into the harbor of New Amsterdam. Peter Stuyvesant, although offered generous terms of surrender, wanted to fight but was persuaded by the citizens of the town to capitulate. The town and the colony became the possessions of the Duke; as proprietor he had complete power of governance but exercised relatively benign control and did not enact any punitive measures against the Dutch inhabitants.

The switch in political control of New Amsterdam, now New York, from the Dutch, in the form of the West India Company, to the English, under the Duke of York, did not make many changes to the daily lives of its people. The terms of the Articles of Capitulation assured that the citizens of New Amsterdam, provided they swore an oath of loyalty to the king, would lose neither their properties nor their customary liberties. Laws became English but municipal records continued to be kept in Dutch and the Reformed Church continued to be supported by taxes and was permitted to maintain schools. Direct trade with the Netherlands was allowed to continue, in spite of the English Navigation Acts. The Duke of York and his representative, Colonel Richard Nicholls, were serving their own interests through their generosity, for they were convinced that more profit would come from a willing and contented populace than from oppressed and disgruntled inhabitants.

Eight years later, the hostilities that had led to the English invasion of New Netherland (preliminaries to the Second Anglo-Dutch War) flared up again in the

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Third Anglo-Dutch War. The Dutch, under Admiral Cornelis Evertsen—the notorious “Kees the Devil”—attacked English colonies in the Caribbean then worked their way north to the Chesapeake and, in July 1673, New York. Evertsen captured New York and returned it to Dutch rule as New Orange, in honor of the House of Orange and its prince, William, currently successfully leading his forces against England. Nevertheless, the return to Dutch rule and laws was brief: in 1674 the treaty ending the war included the provision that the States General would return to England lands it had taken, including New Netherland. New Orange was again New York and would remain so.

English reassertion of political control was under the same general terms as those granted to the population in the Articles of Capitulation. The new English governor, Edmond Andros, favored the merchants of New York over those of other areas in the colony for he passed laws stipulating that all goods coming into and out of the colony would pass through the city. The city was the only place where food stuffs, especially flour, now one of the major export commodities of the colony, could be packed for export.

Some changes did occur as a result of the reestablishment of English authority in 1674. Municipal and court records had to be in English and London merchants began to seek a more active trade with New York. The Duke of York responded by forbidding direct trade with the Netherlands. Trade with the Netherlands was possible only under a special passport from the Duke, with the stipulation that ships would stop at English ports to pay additional duties. Some New York City merchants with well-established trading connections in Amsterdam made it a regular practice to have their ships call at Falmouth or Dover, where port officials were reputedly lax about collecting duties, rather than at larger English ports but, by the end of the 1680s, almost all of the large Amsterdam merchants who had been instrumental in the American trade had sold their lands and properties in New Netherland (Rink 1986:205, Ritchie 1976:17).

A number of Dutch-American merchants continued to trade with the Netherlands under the restrictions imposed by the English. Even if they had to stop in England on the way from Amsterdam to New York, they still transported Dutch goods to the people of the city. For instance, the Hardenbrook-Philipse family had a fleet of merchant vessels that traded in the West Indies, Africa, and the Indian Ocean as well as in the Netherlands and along the east coast of North America. Similarly, the Livingston family (see Rothschild Chap. 6) had family and trading connections in Amsterdam and Scotland. Both the Philipse and Livingston families were among those who became wealthy and politically powerful under English rule. Trade with Europe was crucial but so was trade with the plantations in the West Indies, especially in commodities that could not be successfully grown there, most importantly wheat for bread.

The Duke of York became King James II in 1685. Three years later he incorporated his New York possessions, along with the colonies of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, into the Dominion of New England. The Dominion lasted only a year until the Glorious Revolution of 1688/1689 deposed James and replaced him with his daughter Mary and son-in-law William of Orange as corulers, a peculiar historical twist that ended 50 years of conflict between England and the Netherlands with a member of the Dutch House of Orange on the throne of Great Britain.

The Glorious Revolution manifested itself in New York as a period of political uncertainty. Local officials, appointed by King James, did not surrender their authority, but a number of citizens took matters into their own hands, turned the officials out of their offices, and formed a Committee of Safety to govern the city and colony, shortly thereafter making Jacob Leisler commander-in-chief of the province. Leisler was the de facto governor of the province until 1691, when a governor appointed by William and Mary, Colonel Henry Sloughter, arrived. Leisler had made powerful enemies among the formerly leading men of the city who soon sailed to England to present their case to the new monarchs, characterizing Leisler and his supporters as “a rable” and, worse still, “Olleverian,” a reference to Oliver Cromwell, the former Lord Protector of England whose reputation suffered a complete reversal after the restoration of the monarchy. Leisler and his most prominent supporter, his son-in-law, were arrested and executed.

One of the activities undertaken by Sloughter and the provincial assembly was the passage of the Judiciary Act of 1691, which ended all references to Dutch legal practices and established English common law as the legal standard. New York was now completely English in its government and legal systems. Under Dutch law, which drew on both Roman and Germanic antecedents, the legal position of women was much different than under the patriarchal laws of the English. Dutch women could own property outright, without regard to their marital status, and their participation in the economic life of their families and communities was taken for granted. Dutch women took their father’s first name as their surnames (with the suffix “se” or “ze”) rather than their husbands’ family name. A blow to Dutch-American women’s independence had already been struck in 1684 when the provincial Assembly passed “An Act for Quieting of men’s estates” which denied “a married woman the right to purchase land or conduct business in her own name” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:87) and this adoption of English common law further limited women’s economic possibilities, although some women, almost always widows (see Geismar Chap. 7) remained in business

Population had been increasing steadily since mid-century but the countries of origins of immigrants had changed with many more people coming from Great Britain after 1664. By 1680, people from Great Britain were 20% of the population (Burrows and Wallace 1999:87). In 1685 Louis XIV of France revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had given religious toleration to Protestants, and Huguenots left the country, many for North America. By 1688, there were approximately 200 Huguenot families in the city with their own church. In 1702 a devastating small pox epidemic killed almost ten percent of the city’s inhabitants. The governor and his council, along with those who could afford to, fled the city to nearby rural areas, a pattern that would continue throughout this century and well into the next when summer pestilences struck the city. The city recovered and population began to expand once more.

Increasing population led naturally to increased building of houses and other structures and to what became a common New York City practice: making land along the edges of Lower Manhattan. The first large-scale landfill took place in the latest 1680s and early 1690s along the East River; landfilling continued into the late twentieth century with the construction of Battery Park City along the Hudson. Many of the houses built on the first landfill were constructed in a Dutch rather than

an English urban style. Even while laws were becoming English, New York remained visually Dutch.

Sarah Kemble Knight, a Boston widow and businesswoman, traveled from there to New York City in 1704. Along the way she kept a diary in which she recorded her observations about the people and places she encountered. She made several entries about the Dutch characteristics of the city. She described a typical New York City Dutch-style jambless fireplace as an unfamiliar, to her, structure: “the fireplaces have no jambs (as ours [at Boston] have) but the backs run flush with the walls, and the hearth is of tiles and is as far out into the room at the ends as before the fire” (Knight 1901:62). She also observed that the Dutch and English women in New York had differences in their dress. The English, she noted, dressed according to the current fashion as she was familiar with it, but “the Dutch, especially the middling sort, differ from our women” in their dresses, caps, and jewelry (Knight 1901:63). Most noticeably, they wore many large, colorful earrings and rings.

A later visitor, the Swedish naturalist Pehr Kalm, who traveled throughout the Northeast from 1748 to 1751, noted that Dutch-Americans at Albany were much more retentive of their European language and identity than those of New York City. In New York City, especially among younger Dutch-Americans, anglicization was evidenced by the common use of English, increased membership in the English church, and a general “beginning ... to change manners and opinions” (Kalm 1987:142, 626). Nevertheless, if this change was “beginning” in the opinion of this mid-eighteenth century observer, it meant that the Dutch language and customs were still prevalent in New York City at this time and by inference in the lives of the women in these stories.

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Chapter 5

Sara Roelofse, Matron of New Amsterdam

Meta F. Janowitz

When a new colony is established in any part of the world, some of the first settlers are destined for obscurity because of early deaths or rapid return to homelands but some leave unambiguous traces in documentary history. Others receive passing mention in documents although they wielded considerable influence in their own time and left their marks on the new settlement. Sara Roelofse was such a person. She came to New Netherland at the age of three or four with her extended family and lived there for the rest of her life, rooted in an extensive kinship network that included many of the influential citizens of seventeenth-century New York. She witnessed the transformation of New Netherland and New Amsterdam from small Dutch settlements under the control of the West India Company (WIC) to a colony and city enmeshed in the British colonial system.

Sara Roelofse Kierstede van Borsum Stoothoff was born in the Netherlands at approximately the same time as the colony of New Netherlands was established in North America. She was born in Amsterdam in late 1626 or early 1627 to parents who were born in different parts of southern Norway but who might have been of Dutch ancestry. The family—Roeloff Jansen, his wife Anneke Jans, their two toddler daughters Sara and Trijntje, Anneke's sister Marritje Jans and mother Tryn Jonas—arrived in New Netherland in 1630 to take up a farm in Kilian van Rensselaer's patroonship¹ of Rensselaerwyck (Laer 1908:201–205, 281–285; Zabriskie 1972, 1973a, b, c, d.) As part of the first group of settlers in the patroonship, the members of this small extended family were pioneers in every sense of the word. The farming venture was not successful and 4 years later they moved to the

¹ Patroons were individuals granted what were essentially manorial rights to large tracts of land; all of the patroons were major shareholders in the West India Company. Van Rensselaer's "Rensselaerwyck" was the only successful patroonship.

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town of New Amsterdam where both Roeloff and Tryn took service with the WIC. Tryn, called “New York’s Eve” by historian David Voorhees (Voorhees 2001:15–19), became an official midwife. Two more daughters and a son were born to Anneke and Roeloff after their arrival in America; after Roeloff’s 1638 death and Anneke’s subsequent marriage to Everardus Bogardus, the *dominie* (minister) of the Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, she gave birth to four sons (Stokes 1915–1928(II): 264).² Marritje Jans her sister, had three husbands and a number of children, one of whom married Jacob Leisler, leader of New York during the chaotic period of 1688–89 when James II of England was deposed by William and Mary. Sara and her siblings and cousins were the forebears of families that figured prominently in New York’s mercantile, political, and social affairs throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The story of Sara Roeloffs presented here is bounded by two pieces of material culture that are no longer available for study: her bake house and her bodkin. As archaeologists we most often deal with artifacts we excavate, but in this case the artifacts are only referred to in documents or pictures. The first, her bake house in Lower Manhattan, was destroyed by later construction. The second, her bodkin, was excavated at the Oneida Quarry site in Munnsville, Monroe County, New York (Bennet 1984) but its present location is unknown (Monty Bennet personal communication 2006). The excavators at the Oneida Quarry site were avocational archaeologists who did not donate the excavated materials to a museum and the bodkin disappeared after the death of its last recorded possessor. Nevertheless, both artifacts were intimately connected with Sara Roeloffs as a person and can give us different information than the facts found in general histories and in the works of genealogists. The following is a brief outline of her life, as seen in official records or noted in secondary sources (Evans 1968; Evjen 1916; Stokes 1915–1928; Voorhees 2001; Zabriskie 1972, a, b, c, d).

In 1634, when Sara and her family moved to New Amsterdam, the Director-General was Wouter van Twiller, a nephew of Van Rensselaer, who, although inexperienced and incompetent, had the virtue of wishing to coexist harmoniously with the *wilden*, as the Dutch called the Native Americans. The next Director, Willem Kieft, did not share this virtue and was responsible for wars with the *wilden* that were ruinous for the local Native Americans (see Chapter 1) and that retarded the development of the Dutch settlement.

The WIC employed soldiers, sailors, farmers, merchants, and all sorts of craftsmen; the great majority were men, often unmarried, looking to make their place in the world. Some came to New Netherland not to stay but to make money and return to Europe, but others sought to establish themselves in the New World, where they

²The progeny of Anneke Jans have a special place in New York legal history as participants in one of the longest-running court cases in the city. Roeloff Jansen and later Anneke as his widow and finally her children and grandchildren as her heirs owned a tract of land along Lower Manhattan’s west side now owned by Trinity Church. Her heirs conveyed the land to the current English governor in 1671 but, because one of her Bogardus heirs (then a minor) did not sign this document, his heirs later claimed the deed was invalid and sued Trinity Corporation for a share of the value of the land. The lawsuits persisted from the eighteenth into the early twentieth centuries, creating much publicity and generating many unrealistic expectations. See Evjen 1916 and Zabriskie 1972, a, b, c, d for detailed discussions.

found the lack of marriage partners a limiting factor. Dutch men had sexual relationships with Native American women, and there were many children living in native villages who had Dutch fathers, but very few marriages were contracted (Rothschild 2003). Immigration of European families and single women became much more common after the 1650s; nevertheless, in the 1640s, when Sara and her sisters came of marriageable age, there were many more men looking for a wife than there were potential wives available.

In 1642 at the age of 16, Sara married Hans Kierstede (aged 30) Kierstede had come to New Amsterdam as a physician in the employ of the WIC but soon left to work on his own. Two years previously, her mother had married the town's minister, Dominie Bogardus. Both Sara's new husband and her stepfather were men of consequence in New Amsterdam, so all the town's prominent citizens attended the wedding feast. The wedding has a place in New York City's history not because of the principals' importance but because it was mentioned in what Russel Shorto (2004:205) has described as "perhaps the most famous document to come out of [New Netherland]," Adrian van der Donck's 1649 "Remonstrance of New Netherland." The "Remonstrance," addressed to the Dutch States General, listed the citizens' grievances against the colony's government. As described in the "Remonstrance," Director Kieft had resolved to build a church in the town but "he was in want of money and was at a loss how to obtain it. . . . the occasion of the wedding the Director considered a good opportunity for his purpose" (Jameson 1909:326). After the fourth or fifth round of drinks had been consumed, Kieft announced that he was subscribing a large sum of money to the church fund and asked, or demanded, that each guest do the same. Full of conviviality and perhaps in a competitive spirit, they did. Many regretted their impetuous generosity the next day but were forced by the Director to honor their pledges. Neither bride nor groom is named (Van der Donck says "the minister, Everardus Bogardus, gave his stepdaughter in marriage") but the account gives a picture of the wedding as a convivial gathering of New Amsterdam's most prosperous citizens, where the imported wine and brandy and the locally brewed beer flowed freely in celebration of a young couple's start in life.

After 1647, Hans and Sara lived in a house along the Strand, the shore of the East River, on Pearl Street (Fig. 5.1). Their house, identified as such, is shown on a circa 1650–1653 view of New Amsterdam (Stokes 1915–1928(I):131–132) and the circa 1660 Castello Plan, at the corner of Whitehall Street (Stokes 1915–1928(II):263–264). In their 24-year marriage Sara and Hans had ten children, eight of whom survived to adulthood (Evans 1968[1901]). Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes, writing in the early twentieth century, tells us that

Kierstede led a useful and busy life as one of the few physicians in the community and was often called upon by the court for expert opinions in medical affairs...His great-great-grandson was the late General Henry T. Kierstede of Harlem, who kept a well-known chemist's shop on Broadway, where, for many years, he dispensed the 'Kierstede ointment'—a secret of Hans Kierstede's, [reportedly a cure for hemorrhoids] which remained a family possession for nearly three centuries (Stokes 1915–1928(II):263–264).

Many of Hans Kierstede's male descendants were physicians or pharmacists in New York City (De Voe 1970:248–249).

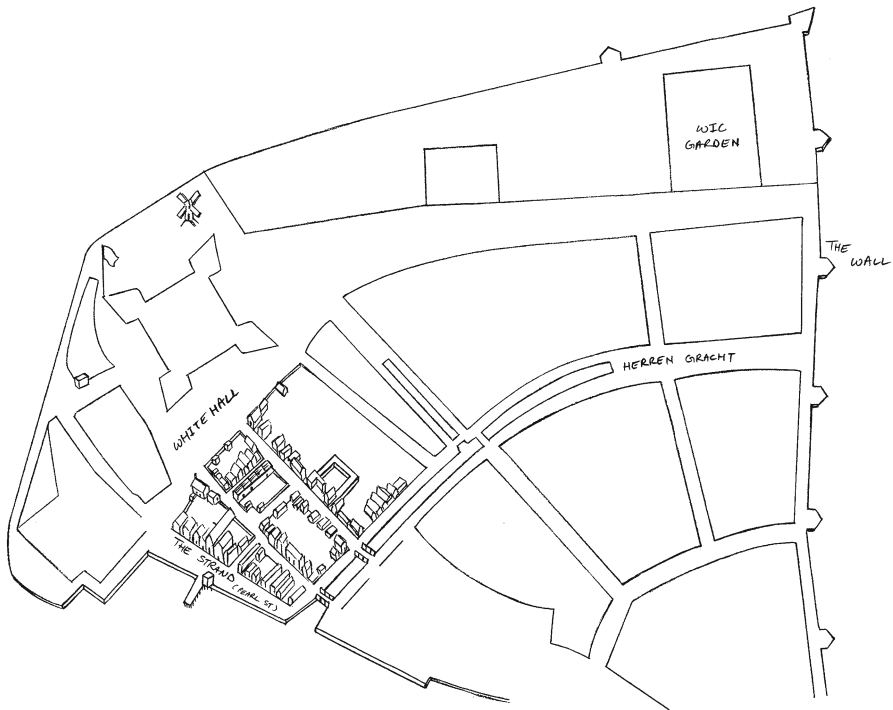


Fig. 5.1 The House of Sara Roelofse and Hans Kierstede Was at the Corner of The Strand and Whitehall Street (redrawn by Erin Broadhurst from the “Key to the Castello Plan” - Stokes 1915-1928(II), Plate 89e)

Hans’ and Sara’s first child, Jan, called Hans, was baptized in 1644; church records show that the sponsors of the child were Sara’s grandmother and aunt along with Director-General Kieft, Michiel ter Oyken, the fiscal, and Dominie Bogardus (Table 5.1), tying the boy firmly into the ranks of New Amsterdam’s political leaders (Evans 1968:18). 1644 was a good year for Sara but not for the city. Kieft’s unjust and ill-judged wars with the Native Americans had resulted in dreadful losses for both sides and refugees from outlying settlements crowded the town. In addition, Kieft sought to pay for his wars by taxing beer, an unacceptable solution to the citizens. Opposition to Kieft’s policies grew and Dominie Bogardus was one of his most outspoken opponents, denouncing Kieft from the pulpit and engaging in public altercations (Shorto 2004:140–141, Smith 1973:169–173). Although matters between Kieft and Bogardus did not come to a boiling point until 1645 (when Bogardus made a veiled reference to Kieft as a “monster” during a sermon denouncing the wars),³ the two had never been on good terms. Nevertheless, they came

³ George L. Smith (1973:170) translated these remarks thusly: “in Africa many animals interbreed because of the heat and in this manner many monsters are generated, but in this temperate climate I do not know where such monsters of men come from.”

Table 5.1 Children of Sara Roelofse and Hans Kierstede

Year	Child	Witnesses
1644	Jan [Hans]	De Hr. Willem Kieft, gouvenor, Michiel ter Oyken, Fiscael, Dr. Everdus Bogardus, Tryntje Jonas, Marritje Thymens (aunt)
1647	Roelof	Jochem Kierstede, Annetje Bogardus (mother), Tryntje [Trijntje] Roelofs (sister)
1651	Anna [died young]	Elsje Thymens (cousin)
1653	Blandina	Lysbeth Cregiers (relationship unknown)
1655	Jochem	Sytie Roelofs (sister)
1657	Lucas	Tryntje Roelofs (sister)
1660	Catharyn	Weyntie Sibrants (sister-in-law)
1662	Jacob [died young]	Marritje Loockermans (aunt)
1663	Jacobus [Johanes]	Tryntie Rodenburg (sister)
1665	Rachel	Tryntie Roelofs (sister)

Information is from Evans (1968): 29, 34, 40, 47, 55, 65, 71, and 80

together to be witnesses for this child's baptism. Was there a friendship between Kieft and Hans Kierstede, or Sara herself, that prompted them to ask him to be a witness at their precious first child's baptism or was it a calculated decision made with an eye to strengthening their family's social and economic position? None of the other Kierstede children had such an array of sponsors: when the next child, Roelof, was baptized in 1647, the witnesses were his maternal grandmother and aunt and Jochem Kierstede, Hans's brother. Subsequent records for the ten children baptized between 1651 and 1665 list single sponsors for each child, all, with one exception, female relations of Sara (Table 5.1).

Sara herself was a witness at a number of baptisms, sometimes along with her sister Trijntje, particularly during the 1640s: between 1642 and 1649 she was a witness at 14 baptisms, including 7 in 1643 (Evans 1968:13–15). 1643 was the year between her marriage and the birth of her first child, after the marriage established her as an adult member of the New Amsterdam community. In all, she appeared as witness for over 30 baptisms of both relatives and unrelated children.

Hans Kierstede died in 1666. It was the norm for widows to remarry and 3 years later Sara married Cornelius van Borsum, a successful merchant, with whom she had one daughter, Anna. During this marriage Sara probably lived in a house owned by Cornelius, across Whitehall Street from the Kierstede house (Stokes 1915–1928 (I):227). Cornelius died in 1680 after 11 years of marriage and in 1683 she took Elbert Elbertse Stoothoff as her third husband (Zabriskie 1973c:10). Sara outlived him and died herself in 1693.

The marriage agreement between Sara and Elbert still exists and has been the subject of studies in early American law (Narrett 1992:77–79). This ante nuptial agreement is greatly in Sara's favor. Not only did she retain exclusive rights to all of her property, with common ownership by husband and wife explicitly forbidden, but Stoothoff was required to maintain Sara and her unmarried daughters, Rachel and Anna: They were to be "cared for and supported out of the estate and property of her future bridegroom as to board and clothing, as is otherwise honorable and fitting" (op cit:78). The agreement circumvented both Dutch and English marriage practices,

ensuring that the husband did not acquire the rights to his wife's property, as under English law, and avoiding the standard Dutch custom of communal property between spouses. David Narrett noted, "this extraordinary document demonstrates the power that some women held in determining the terms of marriage" (op cit:79).

The question remains as to what were the personal reasons for Sara and Elbert to execute such an agreement. From Sara's point of view, and from that of her grown Kierstede children, it kept the money in the family. Narrett, who, presumably on the basis of this document, calls Sara a "tenaciously independent woman," is of the opinion that Elbert agreed to these terms because the marriage advanced his social position. Be that as it may, there was most probably affection between these two middle-aged widowed people and a desire for conjugal company.

Sara's will, dated July 1692 and written in Dutch, has many points of interest. After the preliminary formalities she stated:

Now I will before anything else to my daughter Blandina, of this city, a negro boy, Hans. To my son Luycas Kierstede, my Indian, named Ande. To my daughter Catharine Kierstede, a negress, named Susannah. To my son in-law, Jacobus Kip, husband of my said daughter Catharine, my negro, Sarah, in consideration of great trouble in settling the accounts of my late husband, Cornelius Van Borsum, in Esopus and elsewhere. To my son Jochem Kierstede, a little negro, called Maria, during his life, and then to Sarah, the eldest daughter of my daughter Rachel Kierstede by her husband, Ytie Kierstede. To my son Johanes Kierstede, a negro boy, Peter. I leave to my daughter Anna Van Borsum, by my former husband, Cornelius Van Borsum, on account of her simplicity, my small house and kitchen, and lot situate in this city, between the land of Jacob Marits and my bake house, with this express condition, that she shall not be permitted to dispose of the same by will or otherwise, but to be hers for life and then to the heirs mentioned in this will.

It is my will that my son Luycas Kiersted shall have the privilege of buying the house where he now lives and the bake house and lot belonging to the same and to pay the money for the same to the other heirs, he to retain his share. I have fully satisfied my sons Hans Kierstede and Roeloff Kierstede for their share in their father's estate, being 40 Beavers, as by account for the same, the rest of my estate I leave to the seven children of me and my deceased husband, Hans Kierstede, viz, Roeloff, Blandina, Johanes, Luycas, Catharine, Jacobus, Rachel, and the children of my deceased son Hans Kierstede by his wife Janike equally. Only Hans Kierstede the eldest son of my deceased son Hans Kierstede shall have £1 for his birthright. I appoint as guardians of my daughter Anna van Borsum, and managers of her house and lot my son-in-law Jacobus Kip, and my son [Luycas] Kierstede, and my son-in-law Wm. Teller, giving them full powers as executors ([New York County, Wills Liber 5-6:1-6](#)).

In a codicil of August 1693, she left all her clothing to her three Kierstede daughters and a silver spoon to each of her daughters-in-law.

Sara's will, the most direct presentation of herself that we have, is a Dutch-style will: she had complete rights of disposal of her property; her children inherit more or less equally; and they are named in their birth order, regardless of sex. Her granting of £1 to the eldest son of her eldest son "for his birthright" is a common feature of Dutch-American wills of the late seventeenth century, added to circumvent any claims by this class of heir to a larger share of the estate under English laws, which favored primogeniture (Narrett 1992:130-131). The bequest to one son-in-law but not to any other is explained by the "great trouble" he was put to in settling Van Borsum's accounts.

The most conspicuous feature of this will is the mention of enslaved people. Her possession of six enslaved people (five Africans and one Indian) placed her in the top 25% of slave holders in New York City, based on figures for 1703, 10 years after her death but the first year for which there are statistics (Davis 1984:142). In 1703, the majority of owners who possessed more than one slave used these people for both domestic and commercial—including agricultural—purposes. Enslaved women, as the historian Thomas J. Davis notes, were used as “machines of convenience” to perform domestic duties while enslaved men were used as “machines of production” for commercial work in addition to their domestic service (Davis 1991:173). So what did Sara Roelofse do with her slaves, at least three of whom (two boys and a girl) were children? Was she training them to increase their value as workers and assets? Was she using them in some sort of production activity or as farmers on land she owned? The mention of slaves in seventeenth-century wills was not common: of the 120 men who left wills between 1664 and 1695, only three included the transference of enslaved people to new owners; of the 38 wills left by women (all widows) during the same period, four included enslaved people (Narrett 1992:187, Table 5.5). Narrett speculated that most enslaved people were not mentioned in wills because they were simply included in the deceased’s general estate. Cornelius van Borsum, however, specified in his will that “My negro girl Elizabeth is not to be sold, but to remain in the service of my daughter Anna” (New-York Historical Society 1893:121). Sara did not subsume her slaves into her considerable estate nor did she seek to keep them together, which argues against their employment as workers at one location. Dividing her slaves among her extended family was part of her equitable distribution of assets from an economic standpoint but from a human standpoint this division certainly disrupted any social ties these enslaved people might have had among themselves. Her first loyalties were to her children and grandchildren. She was very explicit, however, in her disposition of specific slaves to specific family members, possibly taking into account the personalities of both the enslaved and the legatees.

The institution of slavery in New York was established under the Dutch. The first enslaved people arrived in New Netherland in the mid-1620s as part of the captured cargoes of Spanish and Portuguese ships claimed as booty by the Dutch WIC (Medford 2009a:6). New Netherland was in dire need of cheap labor for clearing land, building fortifications, hauling loads, and other heavy work; the WIC continued to send enslaved people captured by Dutch privateers to the colony in order to partially alleviate the lack of laborers. The WIC did not become a direct participant in the importation of Africans until 1638, when the records indicate that ships were sent to West Africa for the express purpose of purchasing enslaved people for transport to Brazil (Medford 2009a:7, O’Callaghan 1846:384–385).

Slavery did not exist as an institution in The Netherlands; the regulations that were established in New Netherland concerning enslaved people were thus not based on precedent (Jacobs 2005:384). According to Edgar McManus (1966:11) “The pragmatic Dutch [in New Netherland] regarded slavery as an economic expedient; they never equated it with social organization or race control,” although others have disputed this relatively benign interpretation of Dutch practices (Swan

1998, for example). The manumission of 11 enslaved men in 1644 (probably the first individuals brought to New Amsterdam in the 1620s) along with grants to Negroes of farmland on the outskirts of the town has been interpreted variously as evidence of the justice of WIC officials, as an attempt to provide a buffer between the town and Native Americans, and as an attempt to obtain more foodstuffs for the town, since the grantees were required to pay rent in the form of farm goods (Christoph 1984:113, McManus 1966:13; Medford 2009b:21–22).

In the mid-1650s, individual New Netherlanders were given permission to go directly to West Africa for the purpose of obtaining enslaved laborers; the first such voyage returned to New Amsterdam in 1655, carrying more Africans than there was a market for in the town (Medford 2009a:7). The city by this time had many more European colonists and its labor shortage, while still existing, was not as acute. Nevertheless, when the English took over in 1664, “slavery had already passed from a discrete Company [WIC] institution to a community-wide mode of labor exploitation, regularly reinforced by importations [of enslaved people] and legitimized as a normal and desirable way of life” (Goodfriend 1978:144).

Under the English, slavery became more institutionalized and more emphasis was placed on control of both the enslaved and free African populations (Medford et al 2009c:26–28.). Economic opportunities were limited through the imposition of laws forbidding people of African descent from working at “lucrative employment [in particular carting] that utilized unskilled behavior” and later by prohibiting various forms of independent economic behavior by enslaved people (op cit 27).

One possible side effect of the English takeover of the colony was the resumption by the Dutch Reformed Church clergy of baptisms of enslaved children, which had been curtailed: After 1655, the clergy of the Reformed Church largely stopped baptizing the children of enslaved people on the grounds that parents were not acting out of true faith but rather were seeking to identify their children as Christians in order to increase the children’s chances of escaping enslavement (Goodfriend 1984:100 and 2003; Swan 1998:60–61; Jacobs 2005:315–316). After 1664, baptisms of black children again took place in the Reformed Church but in relatively fewer numbers.⁴ This might have been due solely to the dominies’ judgment of the sincere faith of the parents, however, rather than to political circumstances. For example, all of the children of Claes Emanuel and his wife Lucretia were baptized (Goodfriend 1984:103). The couple married in the Church in 1680, shortly after Claes became a member of the church and 3 months before their first child was born. Both Claes and Lucretia had themselves been baptized as infants (Lucretia was one of triplets) and both of their parents had been married in the Church. Two generations had seemingly proved their faith to the satisfaction of church officials.⁵

⁴ See Swan 1998:78 n 96 for one account of numbers of black baptisms post 1664. Jacobs (2005:316) notes that it is likely that some black baptisms performed between 1660 and 1664 were not recorded, thus decreasing the contrast between pre- and post-1664 numbers.

⁵ I am indebted to Christopher P. Moore of the New York Public Library’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture for insights and information pertaining to black baptisms and sponsors during this time and for several fruitful discussions about Sara Roelofse.

In earlier years, while Dominie Bogardus was in New Amsterdam, more liberal views had prevailed and he himself had performed at least 38 baptisms and 15 marriages of Africans (Swan 1995). In 1644, he was the sponsor (along with two African men and one woman) for one of these children, a girl named Anna, daughter of Phillippe Swartinne (swaart is black in Dutch; “Swartinne” was the feminine form). Swan (1998:57) speculated that Phillippe was an enslaved person assigned by the WIC to Bogardus’s household, although there is no sure evidence for or against this identification; however there might be a connection between this child Anna and Sara. In 1666, 1668, and 1669, Sara was a sponsor of four children (including twins) baptized in the Reformed Church, all children of a woman named Anna Maria or Anna Marie (Evans 1968:83, 91, 94).⁶ Anna Marie has been identified as African, although it is not known if she was free or enslaved. Is this the same Anna who was baptized by Sara’s stepfather in 1644? There was a connection between Sara and the mother of these children, but did it go back as far as the birth of the mother herself? We can only speculate based on the names, an admittedly weak argument. Swan (1995) is of the opinion that European witnesses to African baptisms were the owners of the parents; if this were the case, then Anna and her children had either died, been sold to other owners, or freed by the time Sara wrote her will in 1692.

We do not know why Sara was the owner of five enslaved people when she made her will. As part of the research for the report of the excavation of the African Burial Ground, a team of historians examined residential and occupational patterns of blacks in New York City for 1703, the first year for which reliable figures are available (Medford et al 2009d:55–59). They observed that more than two-thirds of households in the most affluent part of the city held enslaved laborers, the majority women. Enslaved people were part of relatively fewer households in other neighborhoods, although even in the least affluent part of the city almost half held slaves. The general pattern was two or three enslaved people, sometimes a mother and child, per owner, yet many lived in households as the single enslaved person. Sara’s possession of five slaves was unusual, particularly as there is no evidence that she engaged in any activity, such as farming or boat building, requiring much labor. Her slave holding can be interpreted in many ways, either malign or beneficent, depending as much upon the interpreter as upon the available facts. She could be seen as a mistress who possessed young African-descended and Native American children with an eye to future profitable sales or conversely as a protector of children who, for one reason or another, were without close family able to care for them.

Archaeologists first became aware of Sara’s will as part of the documentary research done before excavations at the Broad Financial Center site, where the Kierstede family’s home on the Strand had been located. The mention of a bake house in her will is an unusual feature. When I first read the will, I wondered if Sara employed her enslaved people as commercial bakers. This is unlikely, however, because bakers

⁶ The children were named Lucretia and Lysbeth (twins) and two Annas, the first almost certainly dying in infancy. The fathers were listed as Dirck Hendrickszen, Augustyn Manuels, and Augustus Anthony. The last two might be the same person with variations on his name. Genealogist Henry Hoff identified Anna Marie and Augustyn/Augustus as black. Dirck might have been European (Christopher Moore, personal communication).

in New Amsterdam and New York City were licensed and regulated by the municipal government and there is no record of Sara or any of her close relatives as bakers (Fayden 1993). Her bake house seems to have been for her own use.

Most town dwellers did not have bake houses: They did not make their own bread but instead obtained it from bakers, first the WIC's bakers and later independent professionals. Bread "this most complicated of basic culinary operations" (McGee 1984:272) is a paradox—it was and is a staple food that a large part of the population does not know how to make, or cannot afford to make, for themselves. Bread was not commonly made at home in New Amsterdam for several reasons. One was skill. Flat breads are easy to make—take a dollop of thick grain gruel and put it on a hot surface, cook one side, then flip it over and cook a little more and you're done. Yeast-raised loaf breads are another thing entirely. Skill is needed in the measuring and mixing of ingredients and in how the dough is treated after mixing. There were also financial reasons: bread making before the invention of the modern stove could involve considerable economic investment in the construction of a bake oven and in obtaining fuel. Bread needs heat from all sides in order to bake properly. It can be baked on an open hearth in a Dutch oven (a deep, heavy, usually iron, vessel with a lid), if the vessel is placed in the coals and coals are placed atop the lid, but this method has disadvantages, as heat can be uneven and only one or two loaves can be baked at a time. Bread can also be baked in a reflector oven in front of a fire, but this has the same drawbacks of uneven heat and limited quantity. Limited quantity is fine for contemporary people whose per capita consumption of bread is low, but would not have satisfied the demands of households where bread was served at every meal as a principal foodstuff. Existing documents (menus for universities, almshouses, and orphanages; records of ship's rations; and cookbooks) along with graphic information in genre paintings all show the prominence of bread in European diets during the seventeenth century (Fayden 1993). Treatises on health, such as *De Borgerlyke Tafel, om Lang Sonder Zickten Gesond te Leven (The Burgers Table, How to Live in Health without Sickness)* by Simon Blankaart, published in The Netherlands in 1683, also discussed the paramount importance of bread.⁷ For Sara's family, and New Netherlanders in general, bread would have been a most important food, necessary to the daily well being of the family.

The best way to bake bread is in an enclosed brick oven (Figs. 5.2 and 5.3). The building of a brick oven necessitated costs in labor and materials that most seventeenth-century households either could not afford or did not choose to expend. Brick ovens can take various exterior forms, but the principle remains the same: build a fire inside a brick-lined enclosed space for a certain amount of time (usually from 1–3 hours), remove the ash and cinders (some old recipes advise using a turkey's wing for this but modern books say to use a wet cloth on the end of a stick); put in the bread,

⁷ "Dewyl het *Brood* met regt een Koninklijk voedsel is, sullen wy het d'eer geven om van het in d'eerste rang te plaatsen" (Blankaart 1967[1683]:4). Freely translated (by the author) as "Since bread by right is a regal foodstuff, we place it in the first ranks."



Fig. 5.2 Extant Eighteenth-Century Bakehouse/Out Kitchen (the John H. Vreeland Out Kitchen, Towaco, Morris County, NJ. HABS NJ 493; Photograph by Elena J. Fletcher)

cookies, pies, etc.; close the space tightly; and wait. The initial high heat and gradually reducing even heat that radiates from the heated bricks is ideal for baked goods. Enclosing a bake oven in a bake house protected the oven from weather and gave the baker a sheltered place to work.

Bakers had been among the first craftsmen sent to New Amsterdam by the WIC. New Amsterdam laws conformed to the laws of old Amsterdam, and bread prices, unlike those of other commodities, were regulated. The 1653 Municipal Charter given to New Amsterdam by the Dutch government granted a limited degree of power to city officials, including the power to regulate bread prices and availability. In 1657, bakers were required to buy licenses from the City before they could bake and legal prices for bread were set (Stokes 1915–1928(IV):175). The bakers, as might be expected, objected to the specified bread prices as too low; they contended that they needed higher prices as they had to buy grain in beavers but could only sell their products in wampum (Stokes 1915–1928(IV):180). This meant that bakers would lose money on their financial transactions, in the same manner as a person changing one country’s money for another’s can lose on the exchange. Bread prices were subsequently set at 16 *stuivers* for a 6 pound wheaten loaf, 12 *stuivers* for a pound 6 rye loaf, and four *stuivers* for a 1 pound “white” (i.e., finely bolted wheat flour) loaf (Stokes 1915-1928(IV):181). The sheriff was authorized to visit bakers’

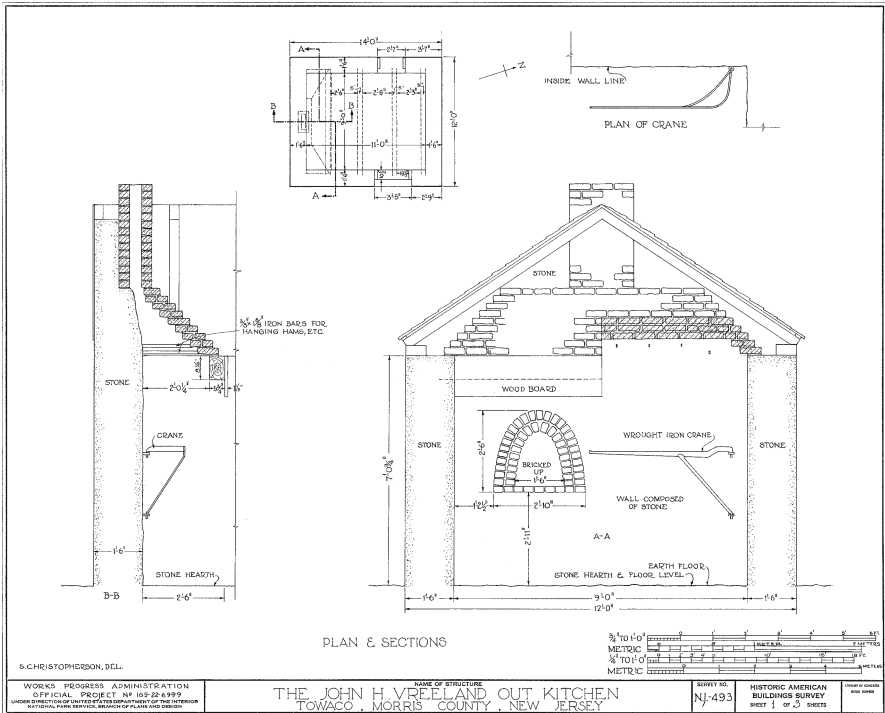


Fig. 5.3 HABS (Historic American Buildings Survey) Drawing of the Interior of the John H. Vreeland Bakehouse/Out Kitchen. (The arched opening of the bake oven had been bricked up before this drawing was made) (<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/item/nj0708.sheet.00001a/resource/>)

shops for the purpose of weighing loaves and enforcing established prices and bakers could be called before the magistrates to account for substandard quality. In March of 1661, when bakers were required to stamp each loaf with individual marks, seven bakers registered marks with the city. Later in that year, two bakers were appointed as “overseers of the bread” whose duties were “to see that the bread is made of good material, proper weight and well baked” (Fernow 1970 [1907]:113). With this regulation, the city moved closer to Dutch practices whereby the bakers’ guild was responsible for the quality of its members’ goods (Fayden 1993). The overseers spoke for all the bakers when they stated they could not continue to bake for current prices, due to the rise in price of flour, and they were granted an increase to 22 *stuivers* for an 8 pound wheat loaf, 18 *stuivers* for the same weight rye loaf, and five *stuivers* for a white loaf, provided that they baked no cookies or sweet cakes (Fernow 1970[1907]:115). The bakers were not satisfied and again petitioned for an increase; no price increase was granted but they were given permission to bake sweets once or twice a week, as long as they had coarse and white bread always for sale (Fernow 1970[1907]:118). (Sweet baked goods

yielded greater profits for bakers because their prices were not regulated and demand for them was high.)

British officials continued to set bread prices and to appoint bread overseers after their country's takeover of New Netherland in 1664 (Fayden 1993). Bread prices had been regulated in England since the beginning of the thirteenth century and the Bread Assize was an institution from 1266 until 1709 when it was replaced by a new Bread Act. Bread prices, under both the Dutch and the English, were tied to flour prices.

By buying bread instead of baking it at home, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century housewives saved time spent in food preparation (although housewives might prepare their own bread and bring it to the baker to be baked if there were room in his oven and the timing was coordinated) and avoided the outlay of money, materials, and space required to build and fuel a bake oven. Household cooking was done on an open hearth, so the construction of a bake oven for the production of breads and other baked goods was not necessary if these goods could be obtained on a regular basis from bakers at reasonable prices. Baker's bread saved time, eliminated the need to invest in costly equipment, and saved on fuel. In addition, baker's bread was, based on the relative lack of complaints from the citizens, consistently of at least moderately high quality and fair price.

The principal disadvantage of buying bread was that consumers could be at the mercy of marketing decisions made by bakers who sought to increase their profits, although municipal laws based on the ideals of the moral economy and of just price were designed to decrease this risk. Pre-industrial Anglo-American legislation "placed the good of the community before the interest of the private citizen" when it was a question of "municipal regulation of critical goods and services" (Rock 1989:161). A secondary disadvantage of commercial bread was that housewives did not have direct control over quantity, quality, or timing of baking.

When the Broad Financial Site, which included the location of the Kierstede home, was excavated, it was hoped that some remnant of the house and Sara's bake house would be found (Greenhouse Consultants 1985). No trace of a bake house was found, however, and subsequent research has cast doubt on Sara's residence there at the time she made her 1692 will with its reference to a bake house. Peter Bayard, husband of Blandina Kierstede, was placed here in the 1677 tax list (Stokes 1915–1928 (I):227) and, as noted above, it is likely that Sara was living with Van Borsum in a house on Whitehall Street after her 1670 marriage.

Excavations at the site of the Kierstede house did find the remains of a privy (outhouse) shaft made from two large barrels stacked atop each other (a common method of privy construction in New Amsterdam). The artifacts found within the privy shaft can be correlated with the extended Kierstede family's later years of occupation, sometime between 1670 and 1710 (Greenhouse Consultants 1985:X-7). Unfortunately for archaeological curiosity, the artifact assemblage within the feature was small, but the artifacts, particularly the ceramics, are interesting. The ceramics include a tin-glazed teacup with a chinoiserie blue on white decoration and a large plate with a blue on white Wan-li paneled border and a central design of an urn (Fig. 5.4). Tin-glazed vessels with designs made in imitation of Chinese



Fig. 5.4 Tin-Glazed Plate with Blue Chinese-Style Motif (Courtesy of the New York State Museum)

porcelain were the preferred tablewares in The Netherlands and Dutch colonies at this time (if porcelain itself was not available or affordable). Other ceramics from this feature were a piece of a large storage jar (an *olla*), made on the Iberian peninsula and originally used to ship olive oil or other commodities, and pieces of two or three Dutch-style earthenware cooking pots.

Dutch-style earthenware cooking pots (Fig. 5.5) (generally, but probably anachronistically, called *grape[n]* by archaeologists and antiquarians⁸) are distinctive and have been found in excavations of numerous Dutch-American households from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries where they can be considered the signature artifacts of Dutch foodways (Janowitz 1993). They are ubiquitous in Dutch seventeenth-century genre paintings and are the most common coarse earthenware vessel form found on Dutch seventeenth-century sites (Baart et al. 1977:241; Hurst, Neal and Van Beuningen 1986:130–135). As a class, *grapen* were bulbous bodied with three feet and one or two ear handles attached at the rim and upper body. Within this overall category are several varieties: small- to medium-sized vessels with, generally, one handle and occasionally a small pushed-out spout; and larger vessels with two handles referred to as *kookpotten* (cooking pots) (Schaefer 1998:22–28). *Vooraadpotten* (storage pots) are similar but even larger vessels with, sometimes, a nozzle spout; according to Jan Baart, they are used for storing foods (Baart et al. 1977:250). All of the *grape* varieties were most commonly made of red-bodied

⁸ According to Alexandra Gaba-van Dongen, of the Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the term was first used in the nineteenth century. See also Schaefer 1998:22.



Fig. 5.5 Small and Large Earthenware Cook Pots (Kookpotten) from the 7 Hanover Square Site. (Courtesy of Columbia University, William Duncan Strong Museum of Anthropology)

earthenware but were also produced in buff/white-bodied earthenware. They were always lead glazed and minimally decorated: some of the red-bodied forms had white slip on their interiors covered with a green-tinted glaze or they could be embellished with trailed slip lines, although this was not at all common.

Grapen were multifunctional vessels used for both cooking and eating. They can be used with a trivet over a fire or placed directly in embers on their tripod feet, as attested to by charring on the bases of many excavated vessels. Some feet also show abrasions on the foot opposite the handle where the vessel was slid over a hearth. Their size makes them literally handy for eating: they can be held in one hand while the other scoops out the contents, although most seventeenth-century paintings show *grapen* on a flat surface with a spoon inside (Fig. 5.6). Larger varieties have been depicted held in the lap for eating. In most of the Dutch genre paintings that include *grapen*, they are shown in use by individuals, usually eating alone but sometimes in small family groups.⁹ They are vessels for informal food consumption designed to hold grain gruel, porridge, soup, or stew.

The *grapen* found in the Kierstede privy are emblematic of some of the continuities in Sara's life: They are the same type of vessels that would have been used by her parents in Amsterdam, on their farm at Rensselaerwyck, in her mother's New Amsterdam home, and in her own home to feed her children. Nevertheless, in her own home the *grapen* were likely to be filled with sapaen (corn meal mush), rather

⁹Jan Steen, the master of painted domestic mayhem, frequently included overturned *grapen* on the floor in the forefront of his family scenes.

Fig. 5.6 Metsu The Sick Child. (Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam [SK-A-3059])



than gruels made of wheat or other European grains (Janowitz 1993). Food preparation methods and ceramic vessels did not change but New World foods were substituted for Old World varieties in the gruels and grain porridges served in *grapen*. Maize replaced European grains in gruels but wheat and rye, because of their gluten content, remained of paramount importance for bread, whether purchased from bakers or made in domestic bake houses.

Although it was disappointing not to find any archaeological evidence of her bake house, it did not need to be preserved and excavated to tell us about Sara Roeloffs' daily life: her decision to build and use her own bake house gave her control over her household's, and likely her children's household's, supply of baked goods. Her will is direct evidence that she chose to do her own baking and had the resources and time (her own, her daughters', servants', and/or slaves') to devote to bread and whatever other baked goods they had the skill to produce. She provided the basic sustenance of bread and the sweetness of cakes and cookies to her family (Fig. 5.7).

The first piece of material culture mentioned, her bake house, concerns Sara Roelofse as a housewife. The second, her bodkin, is even more personal.¹⁰ The Oneida Quarry site, where it was found, probably dates between 1645 and 1655 (Jim Bradley, personal communication 2005). The bodkin is silver and is inscribed "Zara

¹⁰ The bodkin, whose present whereabouts are unknown, was brought to my attention by Paul Huey, who has one of the most capacious memories for artifacts of all practicing archaeologists.



Fig. 5.7 Jan Steen *St Nicholas Feast* (Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam [SK-A-385])

Roelofse.” (Fig. 5.8). This type of bodkin was used by both men and women for inserting drawstrings, ribbons, laces, etc. into fabric and for lacing up clothing (Beaudry 2007:66–70). Bodkins could have strong personal associations and you can’t get a much stronger association with an artifact than by putting your name on it. Who incised her name on this bodkin? Did her three younger sisters also have their own silver implements? How did it get to the Oneida site? Was it traded, either by Sara herself or her mother (who ended her life as a trader at Fort Orange [now Albany]), given as a present or token of affection, stolen, or simply lost and picked up by another? Silver artifacts were not just household items but were portable assets and symbols of social standing and family relationships, as witnessed by Sara’s testamentary gift of a silver spoon to each daughter-in-law. Without documentary evidence, we can only speculate about the history of this particular artifact.

The bodkin, although a very personal artifact, could be a link to the public part of Sara Roelofse’s life, her service as an interpreter between the Dutch and the Indians. The Native American languages spoken in New Netherland belonged to two distinct language families, Iroquoian and Algonquian. In New Amsterdam and surrounding



Fig. 5.8 Sara Roelofse's Bodkin (redrawn by Erica Z. Janowitz)

areas dialects of Algonquian Lenape or Delaware were spoken: Munsee in the lower Hudson region and Unami in the southern regions around the Delaware with “a transitional dialect in central New Jersey by which the two languages’ dialect continua were connected” (Buccini 2000:18). Near Rensselaerwyck, where Sara spent her early childhood, Iroquoian Mohawk speakers were to the west and Algonquian Mahicans to the east. According to Buccini (Ibid.) Mahican “shared features” with Munsee.

We are not certain what Native American language or languages Sara spoke or how fluent she was. Buccini (2000:20–23) calls into question the linguistic competence of the majority of early to mid-seventeenth century self-described Dutch speakers of Indian languages. He contends that these early translators spoke a variety of “Pidgin Delaware” based on the Unami dialect of the Lenape language. In his view, the Lenape themselves developed this simplified language as a means of facilitating interactions with Dutch traders. He is of the opinion that “full acquisition of such languages, in the context of frontier life, by an adult speaker of a typologically radically different language, is virtually impossible” (Buccini 2000:23). Be that as it may, what applies to adults speaking very different languages who seek to communicate for the purposes of mutually advantageous trade does not necessarily hold true for a child learning multiple languages while the brain’s linguistic abilities are still very flexible (Pinter 2011:50–53). When Roeloff Jansen and his family were in Rensselaerwyck, it was said that all of the womenfolk in the family were traders, (probably with the Native Americans).¹¹ After Dominie Bogardus died, Anneke Jans, as noted above, returned north to Fort Orange to make a living, probably in the Indian trade (Evjen 1916 and Zabriskie 1973c). As a widow with dependent children and no source of income, it seems she decided to support herself and her younger children by an activity with which she was already familiar. Thus we can at least hypothesize that Sara had frequent opportunities in her early childhood for contact and conversations with Native Americans.

Sara served as an interpreter on various occasions. One was in April of 1664, when the chief of the Hackensacks and others came to New Amsterdam to resolve the conflict surrounding the killing of a Dutchman. The next month, she was among the interpreters when members of approximately 30 Indian groups met at the Fort in a peace conference with Dutch officials under the leadership of the current Director-General, Peter

¹¹ In a letter to Van Twiller, Killian van Rensselaer said “I see that Roeloff Jansen has grossly run up my account in drawing provisions...I think that his wife, mother and sister [–in-law] and others must have given things away ...” (Van Laer 1908:281). Kenney (1975:243) is of the opinion that the women were trading with the local Indians.

Stuyvesant (Stokes 1915–1928(IV):235, citing NY Col. Doc. XIII:371–2 and 375–77).

Sara Roelofse was not an official interpreter such as those employed later in the colonial period on a more or less permanent¹² basis by the province of New York (Hagedorn 1995). The first official interpreters, based in Albany, were either of mixed Native and European parentage or had spent time as child captives among the Indians. They acted not only as translators but also as cultural brokers and mediators between the Europeans and the Indians (Meuwese 2003).

We can only speculate about Sara's role as an interpreter and possible mediator or cultural broker, although another record might speak to this question. As already noted, the Kierstede house was on the Strand. Throughout the early years of New Amsterdam, Dutch farmers and the *wilden*, as the Indians were called, would come to a market held on the Strand (the East River shore). In 1656, the new City Council decreed that the market was to be held on Saturdays "on the beach, near or in the neighborhood of Master Hans Kierstede's house" (Stokes 1915–1928(I):123). A market needed to be established because farmers from outside the town would come to the Strand with "meat, [probably beef], pork, butter, cheese, turnips, carrots and cabbage and other country produce" but people who did not live in sight of the shore were not aware of their arrival (*Ibid.*). In 1661, the Council passed a resolution that two trading houses should be established to "prevent that some covetous engrossers do not buy more maize, venison and other things, which the *wilden* bring to market, to sell it at enhanced prices to the poor people" ... [the *wilden* were] "charged to sell their goods at no other places than these. It is also ordered that the planks¹³ lying before the house of Mr. Hans [Kierstede] shall be removed, to erect there one trading-house for the Indians" (Stokes 1915–1928(II):264).

Locating one of the official trading places on the shore before the Kierstede house might have been due not only to its convenient location but also to Sara's presence. At the turn of the twentieth century, during a time when romanticized history and filio piety were especially popular, Mrs. John King van Rensselaer wrote *The Goede Vrouw [the Good Wives] of Mana-ha-ta at Home and in Society, 1609–1760*. Mrs. Van Rensselaer created or retold stories about the "good wives" that are almost on a par with Parson Weems's story of George Washington and the cherry tree.

Here is part of what she had to say about Sara Roelofse:

... the Dutch women had become well acquainted with the wild people who surrounded them and were on friendly terms with them. Madame Kierstede was particularly kind to them, and as she spoke their language fluently she was a great favorite among them, and it was owing to her encouragement that the savages ventured within the city walls to barter their wares. For their better accommodation and protection, Madame Kierstede had a large shed erected in her back-yard, and under its shelter there was always a number of squaws

¹² See Hagedorn 1995:407: "None of them pursued interpreting as a full-time occupation, even though they drew a salary for their services"

¹³ These "planks" were possibly the pilings that had been placed along the shoreline. A remnant of one was excavated at the 7 Hanover Square site (Rothschild and Pickman 1990).

who came and went as if in their own village, and plied their industries of basket and broom making, stringing wampum and sewant, and spinning after their primitive mode; and on market-days they were able to dispose of their products, protected by their benefactress, Madame Kierstede (Van Rensselaer 1898:26).

If the author's patronizing and racist attitude toward Native Americans is subtracted from this account, what remains? Did Mrs. Van Rensselaer or another family historian simply extrapolate from the "little house" the Council decreed should be erected and make a leap of faith to the "large shed" in the backyard of the Kierstede house or is there a grain of truth in this account? We know that Sara Roelofse acted as an interpreter. Did she also act as a cultural broker between different ethnic groups? Perhaps the trading house was located near her residence to take advantage of her linguistic and mediating skills (Fig. 5.9).

Another reference to Sara Roelofse as translator is from 1673 (during the brief Dutch repossession of New York); her current husband, Cornelius van Borsum, received, on his wife's behalf as payment for her services, a patent for land bounded approximately by present Broadway, Centre, Chambers, and Duane Streets (Stokes 1915-1928(IV):292). The patent was confirmed to her heirs in 1696 by the British Governor Fletcher (op cit p. 394). A series of legal mishaps resulted in lawsuits among her heirs over ownership of this property, which had become part of the African Burial Ground (see Howson and LaRoche, Chapters 9 and 10 in this volume). It might have already been in use as a burial place for free and enslaved African and African-descended people when Van Borsum was granted title in 1673 (Howson et al 2009:40-42), although neither the original deed nor the confirmation mention a cemetery. The parcel's use as a burying place was definitely established by the turn of the century when the newly established Trinity Church forbade burials of Africans in its churchyard. Sara's heirs, at least, were aware of the Burial Ground, as eighteenth-century legal records of their boundary disputes refer to them as "claimants and proprietors of the 'Negroes Burying Ground'" (Howson et al 2009:42). This leaves us with a final question. Did Sara merely passively countenance use of her property as a place for the burial of free and enslaved Africans or did she take an active part in acquiring the property for this use?

Historical data and the few archaeological traces of her life left to us do not allow us to comment on Sara Roelofse's motivations for her actions. Our speculations are inevitably framed by our own time and our own experiences. We can only step back and imagine what life was like for her. She experienced wars, changes in government, and the arrival of immigrants from many parts of the world as she bore and cared for her large family and survived the deaths of three husbands, three children, her mother, and her sisters. She was a woman of her time and place who grew from childhood to maturity as New Amsterdam/New York itself grew from childhood to some level of maturity as a city. All we have left to try to understand what her life was like are a handful of hard facts recorded in official documents and some ephemeral traces of two thought-provoking artifacts: a bake house and a bodkin.



Fig. 5.9 Sara Roelofse Acting as an Interpreter for Chief Oratam of the Lenape (redrawn by Kaukab Basheer from an original 1936 Federal Arts Project Painting by Howard McCormick Located at the Anna C. Scott School in Leonia, New Jersey. Original can be seen at http://www.njwomenshistory.org/Period_1/kiersted.htm

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Chapter 6

Maria and Alida: Two Dutch Women in the English Hudson Valley

Nan A. Rothschild

Introduction

New York City in the late seventeenth century was a complex place. The town had begun as New Amsterdam, a Dutch colony which lasted as such for more than 40 years. The British “conquered” New Amsterdam in 1664, but much of the established Dutch culture persisted well into the eighteenth century. Dutch educational and inheritance practices treated women as the equals of men in many respects and were a significant aspect of life in New Amsterdam. Dutch inheritance laws granted women a competence not assumed in the law of British male-dominated primogeniture (Narrett 1992). The assumption of economic capability is validated by the lives of a number of Dutch women living in the Hudson valley who served as the economic partners of, or sometimes as surrogates for, their husbands. In this paper I discuss two important women of that period, Maria van Cortlandt van Rensselaer and Alida Schuyler van Rensselaer Livingston.

They are significant in part because of their Dutch origins, their significant economic roles, and as examples of individuals navigating in the midst of cultural change. Today’s city has remnants of its original Dutch-ness, in foodways, language, and the heterogeneity of religions. It is also possible that Dutch attitudes toward gender may resonate in the New York of subsequent generations and I begin this investigation by examining the lives of these two influential trading women (and to a lesser degree, their husbands) through a gendered lens. Maria and Alida were contemporaries, and similar in many ways; however, there was a crucial difference between them: during the time they were economically active, Alida had a husband (Robert Livingston) and Maria did not, having been widowed at a young age.

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Maria was born in 1645 in New Amsterdam. She married Jeremias van Rensselaer in 1662 when she was 17. He had become the patroon (director) of Rensselaerswyck, near present-day Albany in 1658; she had six children before her husband died in 1674. She effectively, and sometimes officially, directed the colony (later, under the British, the manor of Rensselaerswyck); her brother Stephanus van Cortlandt was a co-director (perhaps it was thought important that a man be part of the leadership) but lived in New York City whereas she lived upstate (Van Laer 1935:4). Maria died at the age of 44 in 1689.

Alida was born a decade later than Maria in 1656, into another important Dutch family in New York, the Schuylers. In 1675 she married Nicholas van Rensselaer; a minister who also took part in the direction of Rensselaerswyck, following Jeremias' death (*Ibid.*). However, Nicolas died 3 years after their marriage, and a year after his death, in 1679, she married Robert Livingston, born in Scotland in 1654. He knew the Dutch well as his family had lived in Rotterdam for 9 years. Alida gave birth to nine children between 1680 and 1698 and died in 1727, aged 71 (Bielinski, Stefan www.nysm.nysed.gov).

Archaeology

As an archaeologist my initial thought was to search for archaeological data deriving from domestic deposits associated with these women; however, that quest has been frustrated. Considerable archaeological research has been done at Ft. Crailo (Feister 1979; Huey 1976, 1994; Huey and Feister 1988), a site that represents the remains of a structure which may have been built by Maria's husband, Jeremias, in the 1660s (Huey and Feister 1988; Huey 1976). It appears, however, that this building was rented out by Jeremias, initially to Dirck Teunissen van Vechten on Jan 10/20, 1667/8 (Van Laer *op.cit.* 187, fn 431). The footnotes and letters in Maria's correspondence contain somewhat confusing information about a subsequent rental or sale: a footnote by Van Laer states that Melgert Abrahamsen rented the farm from 1678 to 1687 for fl.500 per year (*op.cit.* 181, fn 407), and a letter written by Kiliaen van Rensselaer (Maria's eldest son, who had just become the administrator of the colony) to Richard van Rensselaer (his uncle) in May 1687 says that "The patroon ... sold to Melgert Abrahamse the little place situated at the north end (of the Greene Bosch), where formerly Teunis Dirck lived for the value of 160 beavers" (*op.cit.* 181). On the other hand, Maria, who does not appear to have lived at Crailo, in her last letter to her brother-in-law Richard, says that her daughter "possesses the farm Craloo as the patroon in his lifetime had it" (Sept 1688, *op.cit.* 188). The possibilities of archaeological information on Alida and Robert Livingston seemed promising as we had excavated the Livingston house at 7 Hanover Square, and archaeological research had been conducted at Clermont, in Livingston Manor. However, these investigations failed as well, as noted in an earlier paper (Rothschild 2008).

Letters

Although there are no archaeological data there are wonderfully informative letters written to and by Maria, and another set representing her husband Jeremias' correspondence.¹ As well, there is a rich correspondence between Alida and Robert Livingston which describes their economic activities and reveals other meaningful information. The letters have been translated and edited by Van Laer and Van der Linden. I have read these important letters with a focus on the material aspects of their writers' lives, applying anthropological and archaeological approaches and theory. In the earlier paper I addressed the subject of Alida as a woman who was temporally and culturally at the boundary between Dutch and English cultures in the Hudson Valley, and considered her habitus in negotiating this boundary (Ibid.).

The families of these two women were entangled economically with one another as well as through kinship; the entanglements emerge somewhat murkily through the letters. A number of unresolved inheritance issues also appear in these sets of correspondence. In particular they reflect the complexities of links and claims between affines and blood relations. As examples, Maria claimed her husband's share of her father-in-law Kiliaen's estate for herself and her children, once her husband had died, and there is a long debate over Robert Livingston's ultimately unsuccessful claim to Alida's share of Nicholas' property (Rothschild *op.cit.* 73). These are not, however, the focus of this paper, intriguing though they are.

Questions About Gender and Embodiment

In this paper I pose a number of interrelated questions. First, given the economic capabilities granted these women, how are their gender roles constructed? What elements are emphasized? How were women perceived (and how did they see themselves) in this place, at this time? It is understood by now that gender categories are socially constructed for specific cultural settings (Meskell 1999:97). I assume that these categories will be manifest in both behavior and material culture and are projected so that others will recognize them. Archaeological examination of the body is one of its important contributions to the understanding of past lives, which incorporate cultural ideas of gender-appropriate material culture. Roles are socially defined and enacted by individuals; the person is both the medium and product of social activity (Joyce 2005:4).

¹ I am extremely grateful to Marie-Lorraine Pipes who provided me with the Van Rensselaer letters.

Second, were any specific aspects of women's roles embodied in their sense of themselves as women? Embodiment reflects a situation in which an individual is conscious of his/her physical self and constructs the world through that self. Earlier approaches saw the body as an object on which particular meanings were inscribed (Boyd 2002:142), through ornament and dress. A phenomenological perspective takes the body as the means by which the point of view on the external world is constructed; it is shaped by and shapes the mind (Merleau-Ponty 1962). Merleau-Ponty states: "the body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is ... to be involved in a definite environment" (1962:94). In his eyes, embodiment is central to a permanent condition of experience, mediated through the physical self (Meskell 2000). Gender roles would seem a natural aspect in which to observe embodiment, in that individuals would experience the world through a number of identity-structured lenses, including a sense of being a member of a specific gender.

Third, is there evidence of male roles and their embodiment emerging in the men to whom Maria and Alida were married? And how different were male and female expressions of gender identity? I am not suggesting that we look for a "typical" male (or female) but rather a sense of what it meant to these specific individuals to be a man or a woman. Since we lack any human remains, or archaeological data on gender, my hope is that the letters will provide information on gendered roles and how the experience of being a member of a gender might have been perceived. Was it recognized? Seen as an advantage? A disadvantage? We might expect these characteristics to be expressed in correspondence, particularly in relation to the home, work, clothing, and concerns about physical selves. Women in a slightly later period are seen as keepers of the hearth and home, and as such could be assumed to have been concerned with the household furnishings. This was found to be true for British-identified descendants of Alida just after the mid-eighteenth century (Rothschild op.cit. 82), and later in the nineteenth century New York City (Wall 1994). But we do not know if these seventeenth century women living in the Hudson River valley saw the equipping of a home as one of their responsibilities.

Archaeologists have searched for ways to understand the construction of identity that include, but are not restricted to, embodiment (Meskell 2000). In looking at how gender categories are expressed with reference to the physical self, archaeologists have used data from the bodies of the dead, ornaments and the domestic and other settings in which people lived. However, in this project we have neither bodies nor ornaments, and we do not have the remnants of houses that Maria and Alida lived in. Going by the Livingston House excavated at 7 Hanover Square, houses were not large, although the Livingston House was built more in an English style than a Dutch one and was twice the size of the adjacent Dutch ones. We can imagine the spaces within which they moved, the landscapes and their tasks. The life of a trader was not an easy or affluent one in the seventeenth century and I suspect that living upriver may have increased the difficulties. If one resided in Manhattan, the port was close by, but those near Albany depended on access to transport through an intermediary, adding another possible set of problems. Maria was born in New Amsterdam but after her marriage she lived in Rensselaerswyck.

Alida spent most of her married life either in Albany or at Livingston Manor, in today's Columbia County.

It has further been suggested that we might include the actual feeding of bodies as well as their decoration and other elements in thinking about the social body (Boyd 2002). We know generally what Dutch seventeenth century diet consisted of, although not necessarily what foods might have been preferred by women over men. One comment about milk (and cows' milk in particular) suggests that it was an especially important beverage for Dutch women of the seventeenth century (Van Beverwijck, Burema 1953:93, cited in Janowitz [Fayden] 1993), but we cannot be certain that this preference would have carried over to New Amsterdam.

We have other kinds of resources to provide insight into gendered roles during the seventeenth century: Dutch genre paintings (the best known created mostly by men) depict both men and women. Written materials from the seventeenth century demonstrate views that Schama says are: "inherited from the rich stock of Renaissance misogyny" ... about "the carnal heat ... simmering in female bodies" (1988:445). Jacob Cats' long poem (1684), "The Triumph of Chastity or Joseph's Self-conflict," depicts Joseph as a scrupulously moral young man whose mistress exerts considerable effort to seduce him, with the explanation that her husband is away too much and she cannot be expected to remain faithful and chaste. He also wrote a long poem, "The Heroic Housewife," which portrays an unreal paragon of a woman (Schama op.cit. 398). Schama suggests that a perception of women as dominated by their bodies was characteristic of northern Europe throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but was particularly strong in Dutch culture where wives were expected to be cleansing agents and keepers of morality, "therapists for the pain of commerce" (op.cit. 400, 447). It appears that men were fearful of women's power, and neither paintings nor literature give us a woman's view. However, a significant resource that we do have are the sets of wonderful letters that these two women exchanged with those around them. It is a tribute to Dutch practices of educating women that the letters were written. As noted above, I will use this rich and voluminous correspondence centered on Maria and Alida as the data from which to draw conclusions, and look for statements about gender and behavior. One of the letters (from Richard van Rensselaer to his as-yet unmarried brother Jeremias in April 1659) on the subject of women, reflects a rather bitter attitude toward that sex. It refers to the murder of a woman by a man they know, who was then put to death. He quotes a Proverb of Solomon "Well may we beware of strange women: 'For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword [sic]'" (Van Laer 1932:49).

Maria's correspondence begins (except for one brief letter) when her husband died; she wrote most often to members of her family, her father Oloff van Cortlandt, her brother Stephanus van Cortlandt, her brothers-in-law Jan Baptist and Richard van Rensselaer (whom she addressed as brother), a sister, Catrina Darvall and Catrina's husband, John. She corresponded with several men about management issues on the land, debts, or trade. There is also an extensive set of letters that Jeremias wrote to people in Holland and in New Amsterdam, or received from them (between 1656 and his death in 1674). And there is the correspondence between

Alida and her husband, Robert Livingston; they wrote to each other often. Most of her letters were to family, with some business letters.

Both Alida and Maria had difficult lives. The colony of Rensselaerswyck had food shortages and other problems resulting from the Esopus Wars, a shortage of farm labor and frequent floods (Van Laer 1932, 6). The worst was in the spring of 1666, when their house and almost all their possessions, stored grain and the like were carried away by floods and ice, and they were taken in by Philip Schuyler (Jeremias to Oloff, *op.cit.* 386).

Maria seems to have been an enterprising woman in the early stages of her marriage. Jeremias notes in April 1665 that he has taken up brewing at his wife's urging (she had managed her father's sales of beer), and he thinks they are doing well with it (*op.cit.* 377). At her husband's death, Maria was suddenly thrust into a role as property manager (Van Laer 1935, 3). She herself had physical difficulties deriving from a bout with chicken pox and a subsequent infection in her hip, which became septic arthritis (Zimmerman 2006:145), and made walking without crutches impossible for frequent periods of time (Van Laer 1935, 4). No formal provision for her support had been made by her husband, although she had a salary (in bushels of wheat) as treasurer of the colony for a few years (*Ibid.*).

Alida spent much of her life living apart from her husband, as she lived in their home near Albany and he resided in New York City, though he spent years in England. He was concerned with his political power and collecting debts owed him by the government, and left the management of their property to her. She was the one responsible for fulfilling contracts that he undertook to feed various groups, notably, and most disastrously, a group of Palatine German settlers in the Hudson Valley (Rothschild *op.cit.*). These two women had very different lives as economic agents. Alida was a partner of her husband while Maria was a widow trying to operate within a world that she believed was dominated by men.

Since roles are complex, we can anticipate that they might be reflected variably in material culture. I have suggested two possible arenas in which a gendered and embodied identity might be visible in letters written by or to Maria and Alida. The first relates to descriptions or requests for material for clothing and other adornment (including home furnishings) desired by women. Some cues on this subject come from a modern historical novel about the women of several generations of the Philipse family based on documentary research (Zimmerman 2006)—which describes Margaret Hardenbroeck de Vries Philipse, born in 1637, and the first woman merchant of the Philipse family, as very involved in trade and desirous of certain material things. Linens and silver spoons seem particularly significant. Zimmerman reports on the “far-from-atypical inventory” of one colonist as including “32 pillowcases and 103 bedsheets” (*op.cit.* 99), and also states that “collecting varieties of linen had become a genteel mania for the Dutch” (*op.cit.* 98). One shipload to Margaret carried “a 2,872-ell length of Holland linen... other textiles, including 10,045 ells of ‘ozenbrigs,’ a coarse all-purpose fabric ” (*op.cit.* 119). Apparently, silver spoons were collected for use but also to distribute at funerals (*op.cit.* 125); at Oloff van Cortlandt's funeral in 1684, each mourner received a

spoon with his name engraved on it (op.cit. 172). The significance of silver spoons (and clothing) are noted elsewhere in this volume, when Meta Janowitz describes a codicil to Sara Roeloff's will in 1693, by which she left each daughter-in-law a silver spoon and all her clothing to her three Kierstede daughters (Janowitz, Chap. 5). Both Sara and Margaret Philipse lived in Manhattan. I suspect that women who lived in New Amsterdam had different expectations (or desires) than women in the more isolated Albany or surrounding countryside.

The second arena for the presentation of embodied identity considers discussion of bodies. The latter issue appears in these letters mostly in relation to illness when it is noted by women (and Robert Livingston, as he becomes older). Jeremias and Robert both discuss the birth of their children, and Alida does so less directly. Jeremias also writes to his mother about his wife's physical problems with her infected hip.

Maria

Letters written to Maria are always addressed to "worthy or worthy and virtuous jouffrow" (apparently a reference to her as a young woman). Even when she is making demands, she signs "your affectionate (and faithful) sister" or daughter. Letters to and from her are mostly about details of trade, who owes boards or grain to whom, who can use the sawmill and gristmill (Van Laer 1935, Dec 1675, 17), the low crop yield (due to weeds, and flooding, (Ibid.)) and the high cost of wheat. She reports on fires and other disasters, who has moved and where, and leasing activities. She also asks several times for an accounting of the debts that were owed to her husband (op.cit. 34), and she makes a request for the colony to be exempt from tax "because we have so many expenses to meet at present and cannot well manage it" (op.cit., Nov 1679, to Stephanus van Cortlandt 28). In a letter to her brother-in-law, Richard, she says that she heard he was shocked when he received her husband's accounting of the colony and comments: "Do not think, dear brother, that it is an account which is made up out of my head...and if I should include all the expenditures...and charge for all the extraordinary meals, a great deal more would be coming to me" (op.cit., Sept 1680, 37). Here she is referring to entertaining that had to be done "to keep up the dignity of the colony" (Ibid.).

There is little in her letters about clothing or ornaments. To Richard van Rensselaer, June 1678, she asks for "a good piece of linen...as that which you left with us has been stolen" (op.cit. 21). In the same letter, "my husband wrote to you about the piece of gold of 28 gl. that was given to me as a christening gift and I should therefore like to keep it as a remembrance and because my daughter is growing up" (op.cit. 23). Her son Kiliaen writes that he received the suit she had sent (op.cit. 153). At another time, John Darvall also mentions that the same son "writes for a hat, because one blew overboard" (op.cit. 80).

There are occasional comments about food, usually these are gifts and represent seasonal specialties. From her brother-in-law John Darvall: "Thank you heartily for the apples. I hope to recompense you...with a keg of oysters" (Fall 1682, op.cit. 81). From her brother, Stephanus: "I wish that you would have Albert Ryckman brew for 10 half-barrels of good, tasty beer"; the fish and mackerel have not yet come (Nov 1683, op.cit. 131). Sister Catrina sends molasses cakes for others and with them she sends 2 large porcelain jars, from her daughter Maria, "costing the sum of fl. 5:10, for which you must send money to your daughter Maria, to buy a cape for her" (Oct 1684, op.cit. 166–67). She thanks her son Kiliaen for the oysters he sent (Jan 1685 op.cit. 177).

Letters took about 6 months to be delivered to Holland, which must have been difficult because many things could have changed during the period between sending a letter and receiving an answer. There is a series of long letters to her brother-in-law, Richard van Rensselaer, who returned to Holland in 1670 after 6 years in the colony. As the only remaining son of Kiliaen van Rensselaer, the first patroon, he believed he was needed to look after the interests of the Van Rensselaer family in Holland (op.cit. 5). Maria asks him several times to return and help her in administering the colony or settling accounting issues, and she writes of problems with Livingston. However, the most frequent request is for him to grant her a piece of land, a sawmill, and gristmill (Jan. 1682, Jan. 1683, Aug. 1683, Oct. 1683 3 times; op.cit. 58, 84, 115, 125, 128, 129). In these requests she appeals to his sense of responsibility for his brother's children and portrays herself as helpless and disabled. "The friends in Holland through the war have suffered great loss...but consider, dear brother, whether to lose my health and in addition to lose my property and my dearest partner and to be left with six children and such an encumbered estate is not hard on me either ...to sit here and ...get further and further into debt" (Sept 1680, op.cit. 38). Again to Richard in Jan. 1682: "I beg you, dear brother,...that as you well know I have nothing but the house and if in addition I then had the piece of land and the mill, I could still live and keep up my husband's station" (op.cit. 58). "I... receive calls from the most prominent people every day" (Aug 1683, op.cit. 117). She writes Richard in Jan. 1683: "I would ask that, ...as I have requested before, I might have the farm of Broer Cornelis, with the small island and the grist mill and the sawmill" (op.cit. 84)...In what appears to be another draft of the same letter she says: "I beg you kindly for myself and my innocent children ...that I may obtain the Fifth kill and the farm of Broer Cornelis... that I may finally have a piece of property, for as long as I do not have anything that is my own, I can not pay the friends, for the rent mounts up too high and I and my children must live" (op.cit. 88).

She enlists her father's support in approaching Richard: Oloff van Cortlandt writes to him on Sept 1683: "things in the colony are all right [except that] the widow of your brother is not very well... is somewhat crippled and might become unfit to attend to the supervision of the colony and then would be much embarrassed, she would like very much to have something of her own" (op.cit. 121). Richard writes to Oloff of his own difficulties in May 1684, about her requests of him to help her with accounts "and have an honest means of support". "If I were in the country I should gladly offer her my services, but as I am the only one left here

in this country, I can truly say that no small burden has fallen on my shoulders” (op.cit. 143). In the same letter he tells Oloff that Philip Schuyler’s widow would like to buy the land that Maria wants, and has offered fl. 2500. He would like to sell it to her (it is clear that he needs cash) but since Maria objects so strongly he will give it to her and deduct the sum from her account, though the boundaries are smaller than Maria claims, “It seems to me that sister, your daughter, is a little too covetous” (op.cit. 145). There seem to be conflicting claims to this land; as the closest relative, Maria has an entitlement, but Schuyler’s widow has the closest land (op.cit. 146).

This particular conflict generates comments about the relationship between the Van Rensselaers and the Schuylers (probably also reflecting the ongoing struggle with Robert Livingston). She writes to Richard in Nov 1683, “I beg you, brother, if you write about the land...not to write about it to my brother Steeven, for the house of Schuyler knows that immediately and that is enough and all they are after” (op. cit. 136). In Nov 1684 she writes to Richard “They [the Schuylers] are no longer our friends...; whatever they can do to stand in our way they will not fail to do” (op.cit. 169). These comments illustrate the difficulties that emerge when relatively few property-owning families intermarry, and the bonds of blood and marriage are in conflict.

Maria understands that Richard needs cash and writes in Nov. 1684 “As you were in need of money, I sold the farm of Pitir Winne to Myndert Harmense...So that I took care that you would get money and I the land” (op.cit. 170). In her last letter to Richard in Sept. 1688, she scolds him for selling land to strangers, “Those who struggled so long in...the colony and who have preserved the colony must now see that strangers are to possess their father’s estate...old Kieliaen van Rensselaer...did it all in order that his children and grandchildren might live of it. I have not dared to go into the place [Albany], because people talk so and call it a shame that Sr Rygart van Ren defrauds the children and the friends.” (op.cit. 186) Finally in Aug 1687, Maria is relieved of being the administrator of the colony. She writes to Richard that her son Kiliaen, now 24, has taken over the affairs of the colony (op.cit. 182).

Embodiment

Maria is aware of the limitations of her body. She writes often of her physical problems and the hardships of surviving in the colony: “I am such a feeble woman” (Oct 1683 to Richard, op.cit. 129). To Stephanus Van Cortlandt, Dec 1681 “my infirmity, from which I suffer great pain” (op.cit. 16), “I wish I might be relieved of this trouble [dealing with Robert Livingston’s claims], for it is too much for me” (op.cit. 30), “If I keep quiet, without exertion, I am reasonably well, but the least trouble makes me sick. If it should please God...I should get rid of the farm, for I can not stand it” (op.cit. 50). “I do not know what I shall do to get grain” (op.cit. 51) She complains to almost everyone but particularly to her father. In Jan. 1681 Oloff

Stevenson Van Cortlandt writes “It is sad about your throat and I do not know what to say about it” (op.cit. 45–6). She occasionally makes a statement in which it is clear that she believes that men take care of women: About her daughter she notes to Richard: “she has a husband who will speak for her” (Sept 1688, op.cit. 187).

Jeremias

Jeremias’ letters demonstrate more of an interest in clothing, both items that are being traded and his own. In many letters exchanged with his mother in Holland, he provides good descriptions of trade in fabric, perfumed gloves, duffels, gold ornaments with pearls, beavers, and liquor. She asks him to be specific as to what kind of stockings he wants (with or without feet; woolen, silk, or yarn, (Dec 1656, Van Laer 1932, 38–9)). He writes his brother, Jan Baptist, in 1657 to send him clothing for a wedding (of David Pietersen Schuyler to widow Caterina Verplanck): white stockings with silver ribbons, black breeches, and Spanish leather shoes (op.cit. 60). He also comments on the relative expense of items in the New and Old World: “I could not get as much for them [2 pistols and some silver spoons] as they cost in Holland the beavers being held very high here” (to Richard, Aug 1658, op.cit. 107). To his mother, in the fall of 1658 when he had become administrator of the colony, he writes: “When you have received the money [for the goods I sent], please be kind enough to have a black cloth cloak... made for me... [with] but one seam in the back... My cloak was stolen this summer from my chest.... Buy cloth of fl. 10 or fl. 11 a yard for I am very fond of fine, good cloth. Have the coat made with a little skirt, according to the fashion” (op.cit. 110). An invoice for goods sent on a ship for the account of Jeremias includes: a black suit, 6 shirts, silk stockings, 48 yards of ribbon, a hat, black and white buttons and a horse blanket, saddle, mirror, and 6 pr shoes (Feb 1659, op.cit. 138–9). A year or so later he requests of his mother a gray suit, to be worn on Sundays, “rather well made” (op.cit. 230) and notes that the last she had made for his shoes is a bit too wide (Ibid.). There are no further requests for clothing after his marriage to Maria. It is clear that some Dutch men ordered their own clothing, and had very specific ideas about what they wanted. The contrast between Jeremias’ expressions of interest in clothing and the almost total lack of any such comments by Maria is interesting.

Jeremias informs his family of his marriage in July 1662, writing to Jan Baptiste that he had entered matrimony with the daughter of Oloff Stevensz on the 12th. He asks his brother to please tell their mother that if he hadn’t been so far away he should not have married without her knowledge, but he is sure she will be pleased: “I shall not sing the praises of my bride, for that does not become me, but I thank the Lord for having granted me such a good partner” (op.cit. 297). A month later he writes to his mother that his marriage should not cause her worry, “fearing perhaps in haste that I had taken a foolish step... This is due to my timidity, for I had been thinking of her already a year or two before.... She is only entering her 18th year but nevertheless we get along together very well in the household. About her face and

figure I have not much to write...I also hope to visit you the year after with my wife, your daughter, who will always submit herself to your authority and obey you” (Aug 1662, op.cit. 300–01).

Jeremias writes about Maria’s problems in letters to his mother (Sept 1663, op. cit. 328) telling her that there had been a chickenpox epidemic and Maria had had a severe case. In April 1664, he writes again to say that the pain in her leg and hip were much worse. “She has not been able to walk or stand on it...we tried many remedies...thank God it has now improved...she can move it and begins to walk with a crutch.” He also tells her that their first child, Kiliaen, is a fine chubby boy (op.cit. 349). Subsequent letters to his mother or Maria’s father indicate that the health problem has not been resolved. He writes of the birth of a daughter, Anna, in Aug 1665, and that in Nov 1665 a surgeon removed a chunk of infected flesh from Maria’s hip which was still festering. “Her leg is quite weakened but I hope... she will regain her full health” (op.cit. 385). In July 1667 he writes his mother that a large sliver of bone was removed from Maria’s leg (op.cit. 392)

Alida

In the earlier paper noted above, I considered many of the items that were mentioned in letters between Alida and Robert Livingston (Rothschild op.cit). Here I will focus on items relating to possible expressions of gender identity. With respect to fabric and clothing, Alida made many requests for specific kinds of fabric or trim, more for her children than her. However, considering that all their clothing (or fabric for clothing) seems to have been sent from New York, the requests were not unreasonably frequent. They are more common and perhaps more specific when Alida was living in Albany, before she moved to Livingston Manor. “Buy 2 more yards of that silk for Susie’s jacket” (GLC03107.00212, April 1692), “Marghriet would love to have ...silver fringe and as much handsome silk as for a dress at the manner but I don’t know if we can afford it” (GLC03107.00410, May 17, 1698, Albany), “Marghriet now goes off to have her bonnets made at the manner... she expects a new dress from you” (GLC03107.00413, June 1698, Albany), “Gijsbert would like a pair of shoes” (GLC03107.00837, Sept 1711), “Let Robbert have a new garment if he needs it and Gijsbert would like to have fine cloth for a garment” (a few days later; 00838) “You have to buy better cloth for Gijsbert he said it is best for clothes” (GLC03107.00840, Sept 1711).

Alida does show some interest in her own dress, especially in the earlier letters: “Write to me what the fashions of the times are” (Biemer 1982, April 1698). “Buy as much silk (as needed) for a newfashioned nightshirt for me for I need one badly... and 4 quarter handsome silk” (GLC03107.00400, Albany, Feb 22, 1697/8). “I have had a sycamore dress made for myself” (Biemer 1982, undated letter 1714). “One and one-half yard plain very fine muslin for a cape with ruffles” (GLC03107.01095, April 1714), and an odd instruction which seems to suggest that she is asking him to design a dress for her son Robert’s wedding in reference to a painting: “I send you

my picture/painting I request that the dress be changed to a less tight dress the neck not so bare and the clothes darker” (GLC03107.01215, Oct 1717).

There are quite a few requests for shoes: “One-half dozen stockings for me and your daughter do not forget mine and your daughters shoes” (GLC03107.00827, July 1711), “We need a pair of shoes for me a pair for Naetje a pair for Robbert a pair for Hendrikje for we walk without shoes” (GLC03107.00851, Nov 1711), “Please send yours and Robbert’s old shoes up for I can’t send anyone out they are nearly all barefooted” (GLC03107.01169, May 1717).

Confirming Zimmerman’s (2006) statement about the importance of fabric to Dutch women, I previously noted requests for linen, lace, cotton, silk, satin, muslin, cambric, Bristol fabric, German flax, and damask (Rothschild 2008:79); it is difficult to tell how much is for personal use and how much for sale, but the requests are often quite specific: “Hansoom muslin has done very well, also both flowered and striped (GLC03107.00402, March 1698), an ounce of orange sewing silk” (GLC03107.00403, March 1697/8), silver fringe or braid is mentioned several times (GLC03107.00409; GLC03107.00410, both 1698, GLC03107.01100, 1714), “We need white and flowered cotton for 3 guilders the geert and linnen for shirts” (GLC03107.00413, Albany 1698). Lace is requested often (GLC03107.00840, Sept.1711; 00844, Oct 1711); black sewing thread, black mohair, and black camisole buttons (GLC03107.0830, July 1711), black crepe, silk, ribbon and needles (GLC03107.00840 Sept 1711), “a piece striped konbeers and colored cotton...2 dozen beautiful silk handkerchiefs” (GLC03107.00838, Sept 1711), “2 pieces brown fine osemb” (GLC03107.01906, May 1714)

Amidst a range of mostly practical requests are sprinkled a few for what would appear to be home furnishings; some seem related to an elite status. Alida makes two requests from Albany in March 1698 (the 20th and 24th) for a painting “for the space where the muskets were hanging” (GLC03107. 00402, 00404). In July, 1711 she asks Robert three times to send her tea cups (GLC03107. 00825–27). In April of 1692 she writes Robert that she is sending him 8 silver spoons and a salt shaker (GLC03107.00212), and late in her life she asks for two gilt paintings, eighteen chairs from Boston and a painter to create a landscape for the house (Biemer op.cit.).

Robert also makes requests of her for clothing, for nightshirts, silk socks, his cane, for horsemane and tail for bed and chair. He also writes of his quest for comfortable shoes; the most appealing are two letters to her, in May 1722: “There is no red leather in the whole town. I will have mules made for you of brocaded silk” (LFPD j143) and “The shoemaker is busy making a pair of shoes and pair of mules of kicking for [you] my dearest” (LFPD j148).

Embodiment

Basically a healthy woman, Alida is aware of her body as it makes demands on her. She makes some comments about her body, and her overall condition: “I am becoming quite uncomfortable” (GLC03107.00398, Feb 1697/8), “It saddens me

to be without you in my condition” (pregnant, one assumes; GLC03107.00403, March 1697/98), “I was delivered of a young daughter but am very weak of the burning fever and am sick out of my head” (GLC03107.00412, June 1698), “I have trouble enough here with my sick body” (GLC03107.01168, May 1717), “I have had now four very bad days with coughing and fever” (GLC03107.01204, Sept 1717), “I can not sleep...not one hour in a whole night I can not be left alone” (GLC03107.01212, Oct 1717); “I am now getting worse...the phlegm(?) are now hard and sore and the fever with the cough” (GLC03107.01214, Oct 1717). There is some self-pity in Alida but such comments are few and remarkably un-whiny. In spite of her declining health, on 23 June 1722 she writes: “You have sent me a doctor. Do you think I do not have any work to do and that I can just take care of strangers? I gave him a horse...[but he cannot find a room]. We are in the hay fields now so it will probably be a while before I can get rid of the apostle” (Biemer op.cit.). She is more likely to say (often) how sad she is, how she wishes he were there, and sometimes “It looks very much as if you think about us very little” (Sept 1698, Biemer op.cit.), or “I am without light in the house and I have not seen any oil yet” (May 1714, Biemer op.cit.).

Robert also describes his ailments, including a bout of kidney stones, but does it in a rather matter-of-fact manner. In one of the more intriguing letters, Robert describes their daughter’s surgery: “our daughter Mary has been operated on for cancer in the breast this forenoon...she is still full of pain but the doctors say things will be in a good way” (LFPD j20, Sept 1711). The next sentence refers to prosaic subjects: shipping rum, sugar, and tobacco.

Embodiment could be reflected in the selection of specific foods: Alida asks at different times for spices, prunes, raisins, rice, bayleaves and cinnamon sticks, rum, molasses, sugar, salt, pepper, tobacco, cloves, and tea (57), but there is no way of knowing if these items are to sell or for the family’s consumption. There are many other more basic items mentioned: wheat, peas, apples, that were dietary mainstays and do not appear to be gender-specific.

Conclusion

In considering the questions asked at the beginning of this paper, it seems that both of these women were involved as economic agents and did not express concerns about their competence as such, although daily life was quite hard for both of them. Maria and her correspondents keep reiterating the food shortages around them; Alida was concerned with similar issues, but neither saw her gender as a factor in that situation. A major difference between them was that Alida was dealing in the main with her husband, whereas Maria was corresponding with in-laws and her father, and her gender was at the very least a subtext in her letters. Once she writes to her brother-in-law, Richard: “I am such a feeble woman” (Oct 1683, Van Laer 1935, 129), making the point clearer, although it seems that she may have used it as a manipulative device.

Both of these women operated through men, they were the brokers and derived power from their abilities to get others (who were mostly male) to command labor or goods (on time) to meet certain demands. Alida had major responsibilities and could not count on her husband at times. But as a woman with a husband, Alida was free to express some of the perhaps more positive or light-hearted aspects of her gendered role. Both husbands expressed concern for their wives; perhaps they were more able to acknowledge that women were different from men than their wives (negotiating in a male world) were. Jeremias writes about Maria's birthing experiences and her illness; Robert occasionally sends Alida wine and special things.

Maria seems to have begun in a positive way, as an entrepreneur, expressing interest in running a brewery, but in this correspondence, as a widow, she seems overwhelmed by her responsibilities and is anything but light-hearted; in fact she seems to suppress any references to feminine activities. There is no mention of clothing or home furnishings, rather she writes rather desperate letters as she tries to manipulate men to give her what she wants. I believe she is painfully aware that, as a woman, she is subject to the control of a variety of men: her brothers-in-law (husband's brothers), her father and brother. (She has an easier relationship with her sister's husband who has less power in relation to her). She feels keenly her responsibility to her children, for whom she is the sole support. And she also has a sense of social responsibility, writing that because of "my husband's station, the most prominent people call on me" (Van Laer 1935, 117) requiring her to offer them hospitality.

Maria and Alida's letters suggest they both had an embodied view of the world, as do we all. Each saw herself as a woman with a different role than a man's, but being a woman, even when granted economic competence, had quite a different meaning for each of them. Maria's idea of herself as a woman was much more negative, and was compounded by the fact that she was physically disabled, so that she is doubly weakened. She clearly projects the idea that she lacks power because she is a woman without a man to protect or help her, or "speak for her." Alida manifests more of what we think of as feminine attributes than Maria. This may in part be due to the fact that she lived a decade later (and a lot longer) than Maria, and she was not married to a Dutch man; she was perhaps aware of the incipient changes the British were bringing (Rothschild op.cit). Whereas Maria does not mention any items of clothing, it seems from these letters that both men and women were concerned about their dress. Alida projects the image of a woman as someone who should dress in a certain way, and Jeremias and Robert did as well, so we can say that both genders expressed their embodied roles through their apparel. Maria and Alida were remarkable women, economic agents of considerable significance and autonomy, but they experienced that role in quite different ways. Alida was strengthened in her effectiveness by the knowledge of those around her that she had a powerful husband, while Maria knew that she depended on the kindness of her husband's kin to survive. I suggest that, whereas women were seen as economically competent, they were politically disempowered in the culture around them. Further, I wonder whether the absence of reference in Maria's correspondence to her clothing was a dampening of the citation of her gendered embodiment because she was not supported by the presence of a powerful man.

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Chapter 7

Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler, an Eighteenth-Century Woman Who Helped Shape Manhattan

Joan H. Geismar

An urban archaeologist rarely has the luxury of choosing a site. Instead, it is usually selected by the serendipity of location and development plans coupled with environmental laws. Fortuitously, this random selection often presents an extraordinary opportunity. A good example is 175 Water Street, a city block on the east side of Lower Manhattan slated for development in 1981 (Fig. 7.1). Located in what was the heart of New York City's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century seaport, the planned development initiated investigation of the block's history and archaeology (Geismar 1983, 1987). More recently, it prompted research into the life of Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler, an eighteenth-century woman, and her contribution to the block's story. While many details of her life are not well documented, she has proved to be a woman who contributed to the economic and social history of Manhattan and literally helped shape the island.

Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler was the only woman among the eight New York City freeholders who interacted to reclaim this block from the East River beginning in 1736.¹ Wife, mother, widow, merchant, entrepreneur—in her business dealings and in what could surely be called multitasking, she was an eighteenth-century woman who seems remarkably akin to her twenty-first-century counterparts.

Ann, or Anna, Elizabeth was a daughter of Samuel Staats, a prominent physician deeply involved in the politics of his day, and his first wife Johanna Reynders (Christoph 1987:13). Staats, the son of a surgeon who also engaged successfully in

¹ A review of eighteenth-century Water Lot Grantees listed in the Water Grants Location Index (1900) indicated that 27 of 408 individual grantees (or 6.6%) were women. This suggests that Ann Elizabeth Schuyler's role in the city's land filling history, while far from the norm, may not have been unique.

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Fig. 7.1 Project location in Lower Manhattan (175 Water Street block) (5-Borough Overlay, enhanced, NYC Dept. of City Planning)

trade, was born in New Amsterdam or Albany but it is said he departed for the Netherlands upon the first English takeover in 1664.² He later married Johanna Reynders of Albany, and it seems at least two of their children were born out of the country (Ancestry.com 2004; Rootsweb 2000), possibly in the Netherlands where

²It should be noted that according to information found in a family bible (Isaac Gouverneur cited in Schuyler 1885:428), he would then have been only 7 years old.

Staats apparently studied medicine.³ In 1689—the year after Queen Mary II and her Dutch husband, William III, Prince of Orange, jointly ascended the English throne—Staats came to New York City where he lived until his death at 58 in 1715 (Pelletreau 1894:156–157; Schuyler 1885:172; Staats 1921:144–145). Ann Elizabeth was baptized in New York in 1690, the year after her father, presumably with his young family, returned to the English colony (Christoph 1987:56), and, although one record indicates that Albany was her birthplace (Ancestry Plus 2004:re Elizabeth Staats Schuyler), Ann Elizabeth was more than likely born in New York City.

The city's population was diverse under the Dutch and remained so under the English, and daily life did not radically change after 1664. However, the shift in government altered at least one aspect of life in the colony: whereas under Dutch law women could own property and engage in trade, English law restricted these privileges to unmarried women and widows (Berkin 1996:83–87).

On August 28, 1713, Ann Elizabeth married Philip Schuyler, the eldest son of Brandt Schuyler, a prominent New York City merchant, and Cornelia Van Courtlandt (Purple 1890:120). Given the interaction among New York's leading colonial families, it is perhaps not surprising that Ann Elizabeth was the niece, by marriage, of Alida Schuyler Livingston, her father-in-law's older sister (Bielinski 2000) and the subject of another chapter in this volume (Rothschild Chap. 6). No biography or diary has been located to inform us of Ann Elizabeth's childhood, of her married life, or of her widowhood, but genealogies, wills, official records, and business accounts offer clues. At the same time, the records present some puzzles. For one, her aforementioned place of birth. Even more of a conundrum is her marital history.

Exactly when Ann Elizabeth was widowed is a question: one record says Philip died in 1722 (Ancestry Plus 2004) others say 1724 (Christoph 1987:56); his will, drawn in 1722, was proved on December 1, 1725 (Pelletreau 1894:327). Another question is raised by Ann Elizabeth's own will, dated 1766 and probated in 1769. In it, she is identified as the widow of John Schuyler rather than Philip (Liber of Wills 1768:26:161–163). Yet the grandchildren named in the will verify it is hers. Then who was John Schuyler?

One of Philip Schuyler's siblings was a younger brother named, John, or Johannes. John, who was Ann Elizabeth's age, married shortly before his death in 1729 (Holland Society 1940:190). A marriage record indicates his wife was Sara Walther who lived on as his widow for 12 years (Christoph 1987:57). John's will, prepared before his marriage and never updated, names his nephews, Brandt and Samuel Schuyler, the sons of his sister-in-law, Ann Elizabeth, and his deceased brother Philip, as his heirs (Pelletreau 1895:25). He also appointed Ann Elizabeth an executor. Is it possible the record is wrong and he actually married Ann Elizabeth

³ Aspects of Samuel Staats' life, like so much early data, are often ambiguous or contradictory, and, in his case, even fanciful. For example, it is unclear if he was born in or near Albany or in New Amsterdam and if he married his Albany-born wife in the New World or in the Netherlands. As for the fanciful, some sources say he married an East Indian princess after being sent to India by the Prince of Orange sometime before his return to New York (this tale is cited and refuted in Ellsworth 1992:24 as well as in Schuyler 1885:172).

and shortly thereafter yet again made her a widow? Or, as is more likely, did the will's copyist make a mistake in naming John as her deceased husband?⁴

Whatever the case, Ann Elizabeth Schuyler remained a widow until her death more than four decades later. Before being widowed in her early- to mid-30s, she had borne four children. Two, Brandt and Samuel, survived to adulthood, but, sadly, both predeceased her, Samuel at the age of 22, Brandt at 35 (Christoph 1987:56; Pelletreau 1896:404). She appears to have been devoted to her grandson, Samuel, and two granddaughters, the surviving children of her son, Brandt, who in his will bequeathed to his mother and to his wife the "tuition, care, and bringing up" of his children, including a child born shortly after his death and named Ann (or Anna) Elizabeth for her grandmother (Christoph 1987:117).

It is also unclear exactly how long Ann Elizabeth Schuyler, or Elizabeth Schuyler as she appears in many records, was a merchant. An account book, or ledger, in the collection of the New-York Historical Society, identified as Book D, records her active business transactions from 1737 to 1751 (Schuyler 1737–1769).⁵ It is apparently the last of four such account books and the only one known to survive. At least three entries address the closing of outstanding accounts after her death in 1768 or 1769. The last active entry suggests she had ceased trading when she was about 60 years old. It also documents decades of interaction with members of New York City's merchant elite. This interaction was not limited to trade, however, as it also included land reclamation and the social, economic, and environmental factors it entailed.

The old label on the ledger's archive box in the New-York Historical Society reads, "...Schuyler, Elizabeth/Account book 1737–1769/New York City," with "Ann" penned in above and in front of the name Elizabeth. The label on the book's spine identifies it as "Mrs. Schuyler/Acc[ou]nt Book/173[7]-1769/New York City." The names on its hand-written pages, among them Schuylers and Staats, support the ledger's connection to Ann Elizabeth Schuyler: several entries concern the estate of Doctor Samuel Staats, her father (Schuyler 1737–1769:15, 33, 250), and there is one for Olaf, or Oliver, Schuyler, her brother-in-law (Schuyler 1737–1769:15). There is also a 1742 entry for Brandt Schuyler, presumably her son (Schuyler 1737–1769:223). While this account was closed in 1742, unlike most others, no means of settlement is documented (Schuyler 1737–1769:223).

The ledger lists more than 700 clients and customers of many nationalities, a number of whom were women.⁶ But mainly they were men who were well-known merchants, some of them prominent in American history. Among them was Ann Elizabeth's brother-in-law, Lewis Morris of Morrisania (Schuyler 1737–1769:42, 113),

⁴ As noted by Florence Christoph, the acknowledged expert on Schuyler genealogy, the confusion may reflect the fact that an Ann Elizabeth Staats of Albany was married to a John (Johannes) Schuyler of the same place (Florence Christoph 2004:pers. com.), but, according to her will, this Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler was considerably older than the subject of this chapter and predeceased her by about 30 years (Christoph 1987:20).

⁵ I am indebted to Meta Janowitz for making me aware of the Schuyler account book in the Manuscript Division of the New York Historical Society.

⁶ Of 748 names entered in the account book, 111, or 14.8%, are women.

whose first wife was Ann Elizabeth's younger sister Katrintje, or Tryntie/Tryntze (Staats 1921:145). Their son, Lewis Morris, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The ledger also offers a compendium of the goods Elizabeth sold or traded. These ran the gamut from buttons, laces, cloth of many types including cottons, wools, and silks, handkerchiefs, stockings, and food stuffs to "Pistoles" [*sic*], silver, and gold. Often debts were paid with these goods. For example, in 1737, a Francois Maerschalk paid most of what he owed with sugar loaves and casks of milk bread rather than with cash (Schuyler 1737–1769:100, 120). Maerschalk undoubtedly was the Francis Maerschalk who had petitioned the City Council in 1732 to become the city's official surveyor, an appointment he (and a James Livingston) received the following year (Stokes IV 1922:527, 531).

Several of Ann Elizabeth's customers petitioned the city for water lot grants on the 175 Water Street block in 1736, as did Ann Elizabeth (Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York [MCC] IV 1905:373–377). One customer and fellow petitioner was Abraham DePeyster who was among New York's most prominent merchants; another was James Alexander, also a leading merchant as well as Surveyor General of New York and New Jersey (Valentine 1864:563).

Although entries in the ledger book continue until 1769, after 1751 they are all settlements rather than active accounts. The last active entry in Ann Elizabeth's account book is for six yards of material sold on November 21, 1751 (Schuyler 1737–1769:255). This transaction occurred a little less than 9 months before her son Brandt died on August 10, 1751 (Holland Society 1899:190).⁷ His untimely death may have been anticipated since in his will, drawn shortly before he died, he describes himself as "being weakly in body, but having my usual understanding" (Pelletreau 1896:404). If Ann Elizabeth's only surviving child was suffering from a prolonged illness, the timing for her apparent withdrawal from active trading may not be a coincidence.

As a widow, Elizabeth Schuyler was eligible to own property in 1737, when the city ultimately issued water lot grants to create the 175 Water Street block.⁸ Her grant, which extended 200 ft into the East River, was 24 ft wide on the Water Street side and 18 ft 8 in. wide along the river. The grant to "Elizabeth Schuyler, Merchant" was issued on June 21, 1737, but, at some point, the word merchant was crossed out and "widow" substituted (Grants of Land Under Water [GLUW] 1737:335). This undoubtedly was a concession to the aforementioned prevailing

⁷This is the date listed in a published record of burials in the Dutch Church, New York (*Yearbook of the Holland Society* 1899:190); however, Christoph gives his date of death as August 15, 1752 (1987:56).

⁸Although eight of the block's nine water lot grants were issued between June and August 1737, the Minutes of the Common Council for May 1736 indicate that a petition for these grants by the potential water lot grantees, all of whom owned the previously reclaimed land to the west, was favorably received by the Council the year before, that is, on May 5, 1736 (MCC IV 1905:373–375). The remaining water lot (No. 9), which adjoined Burling Slip, was not granted until 1749 (Grants of Land Under Water Index 1900).

English law. Her yearly rent was £1 10s 6p to be collected on the 25th day of March, known during most of the English Colonial period as “Lady’s Day.”⁹

Thus the block’s history began with grants for land under the East River issued to Schuyler and seven other wealthy New York City freeholders “forever,” each of them paying the city a yearly rent ranging from over £2 to a little more than £1, depending on the width of the lot (MCC IV 1905:373–377). The aforementioned Abraham DePeyster and his son Peter received Water Lot 1; James Alexander, the merchant and surveyor, in partnership with Archibald Kennedy, also a member of New York’s merchant elite and for many years Collector of Customs, received Water Lot 2. John Tiebout, a turner (someone who works with a lathe on wood, stone, and/or metal), Henry Rycke (or Ryke), a blacksmith, and Edward Burling, a merchant, received Lots 3, 4, and 5. Burling’s lot adjoined the south side of Elizabeth Schuyler’s water lot (No. 6). Wynant van Zandt, another turner, acquired Lot 7 to the north. The eighth grant was to Peter Bayard, a merchant (GLUW 1737:303, 310, 317, 323, 329, 333, 340, 349; MCC IV 1905:373–377). The City retained the ninth water lot that abutted Burling Slip until 1749, when it was leased to David Provost for 99 years rather than “forever” (GLUW 1749:401).

A stipulation in each of these grants called for adding 15 ft. to Water Street, which was then 30 ft. wide, to create a 45-ft. wide street along the grant’s western limit; another requirement was to build a 40-ft. wide wharf or street at Burnett’s Key along its eastern edge. All this was to be done at the grantee’s expense, and was to be completed within 9 years of the grant’s issue (GLUW 1737:337–338).

Like the names in Ann Elizabeth Schuyler’s ledger, those of the water lot grantees suggest the cultural diversity of eighteenth-century New York City. Her married name, as well as those of DePeyster, Tiebout, Rycke, and Van Zandt, reveals her husband’s Dutch ancestry and that of several of her fellow water lot grantees, while Alexander and Kennedy were both born in Scotland (Valentine 1864:562; 590). Diversity is also suggested by Ann Elizabeth’s dealings with Rodrigo Pacheco, a Sephardic Jew who was a resident of New York and active in colonial trade. Two entries in Ann Elizabeth’s ledger book, one in 1737 and another in 1739 (Schuyler 1737–1769:74, 79 and 166), document Pacheco’s trips to London for merchandise that included the aforementioned “Pistoles” [*sic*] and gold.

Egbert Viele, New York City’s official engineer in the mid-nineteenth century, created a map in 1863 that reconstructs Manhattan’s “made land” (Viele 1863). It indicates that the 175 Water Street block was the second block east of Pearl Street to be created through land reclamation. Therefore, it is no surprise that the block does not appear on a detailed 1717 view of the East River waterfront (Burgis 1717), nor on a 1728 map of the city published in 1730 (Lyne 1730). A 1754 map by the aforementioned Francis Maerschallck, by then the longtime city surveyor, indicates the block was not only established but also that development had

⁹ Until 1752, the English used the Julian calendar where March 25, Annunciation Day (exactly 9 months before Christmas Day), was the first day of the new year at home and throughout the colonies. Hence, its designation as “Lady” or “Lady’s” Day, and the day when rents, *etc.* were often collected (Delmarva Roots 2000).

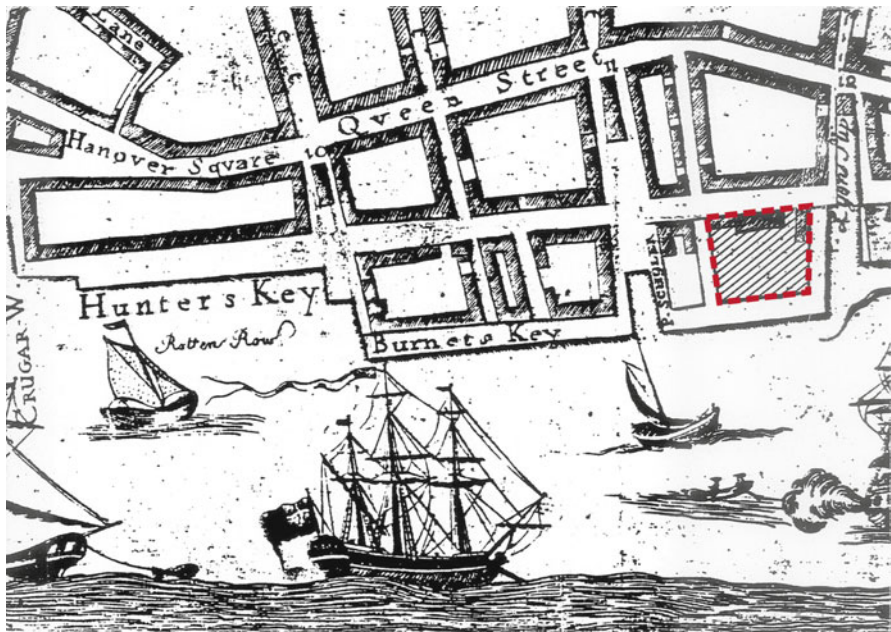


Fig. 7.2 Maerschalek Map 1755, detail. Dashed and diagonal lines indicate the project block. (Library of Congress)

occurred along its western and southern limits (a detail of the map, published in 1755, is shown in Fig. 7.2).¹⁰

The 175 Water Street Block

Almost two and a half centuries after the city issued water lot grants for the 175 Water Street block, the combination of a developer seeking a variance for a building larger than allowed under zoning laws, newly adopted environmental laws—more specifically, the 1978 City Environmental Quality Review Act (CEQR)—and a vigilant Landmarks Preservation Commission brought the block’s history to light. The result was the 175 Water Street Site, an entire city block defined by John, Front, Fletcher, and Water Streets. An active parking lot for almost 25 years, for four and a half months it became an even more active archaeological site.

One goal of the 175 Water Street excavations was to understand how this block, once part of the East River, became land in the eighteenth century. Archaeological investigation documented the block’s fill history that extended from approximately

¹⁰ Various versions of this map indicate disparate development on the block. A copy in the Library of Congress, considered the most accurate, is illustrated in Fig. 7.2.

1740–1795. Undoubtedly at least two primary fill processes were involved. The first, an unstructured process, comprised harbor build-up from dumping and river accretion. The second, which entailed careful engineering, was tied to two episodes: The building of a wharf that later served as a foundation or underpinning for subsequent development and the incorporation of a derelict eighteenth-century merchant vessel into cribbing to define the block’s eastern limit. The wharf—described here as a wharf/grillage because it also provided support for buildings erected in a wet environment, a foundation known architecturally as a grillage (Benjamin Nistal-Moret 1982:pers. com.)—ultimately created the western part of the block. A ship, introduced as cribbing along its eastern boundary by Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and several of her fellow water lot grantees, served to hold much of the newly made land in place while it kept the East River out.

An integral part of the engineering process was the deliberate filling of the space between the wharf/grillage and the ship-cribbing, an expanse of more than 60 ft. To accomplish this, garbage structured by wharves, piers, and cribbing of one sort or another was introduced or allowed to accrue for decades. In addition, secondary filling, undertaken late in the eighteenth century to eliminate pockets of depressed fill, was also identified during these excavations. The archaeological excavation also demonstrated the interaction and cooperation among Mrs. Schuyler and her fellow (male) water lot grantees to accomplish their goal of creating land from water.

With structural elements mainly, if not entirely, of wood, the fill mechanisms uncovered on the 175 Water Street block apparently have their roots in antiquity and their evolution in Europe. Beyond this, as with most traditions, they incorporated local adaptations.

The Roots of Land Reclamation on the 175 Water Street Block¹¹

The earliest documented fill tradition can be traced to Europe in the first century BC. Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman architect and engineer, recorded these traditions in his *Ten Books on Architecture*, reputedly the world’s oldest and most influential architectural treatise. Vitruvius discusses “harbors, breakwaters, and shipyards” and describes methods for using piling, platforms, and wooden cofferdams to create and prepare land for further construction (Morgan 1914:162–164). In this same work, he describes the principles and design of several engines that made it possible to dewater during land reclamation. Among them are the tynpanun, the water screw, and the pump of Ctesibius—the first two of wood, the last a bronze piston engine that utilized water and air pressure (Morgan 1914:293–298). Therefore two principles basic to land reclamation—stabilization and dewatering—were known and used in antiquity.

¹¹ This section, and the one that follows, are adapted from Chapters 5 and 6 on land reclamation researched and written by the author for the 175 Water Street Project report (Geismar 1983:672–737).

Fifteenth-century Europeans rediscovered Vitruvius, and added his knowledge to existing nonwritten construction traditions. By the mid-1500s, Vitruvius' works had been translated from Latin, and French and Italian architects were embellishing his principles. By using platforms and pilings, landfill and stabilization of foundations on reclaimed land became sufficiently sophisticated to allow the Renaissance expansion of such maritime cities as Venice in Italy and Leiden and Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

Early in the seventeenth century, Scamozzi, the architect of Venice, identified several engineering procedures that can be applied to landfill in lower Manhattan. In discussing bridge-building, he described a wooden grillage system of oak upon which a foundation could be partially built and the construction then sunk directly onto a leveled section of river bottom. He also described cribbing, comprised of horizontal boards nailed to pilings, that retained soil in tidal situations; and he discoursed on how old or deformed ships found in seaport areas could be tied together, filled with ballast, and, with partial foundations built on them, sunk to river bottom (Benjamin Nistal-Moret 1982:pers. com.).

Scamozzi was translated into Dutch by 1640, and, after 1670, English translations based on those in Dutch became available (Benjamin Nistal-Moret 1982:pers. com.). Nicholas Blondel, a French engineer, made note in 1675 that a timber grillage, or raft, on which he built foundations for a construction in a French naval city, was similar to those known and used in the Netherlands. Archaeological investigation has revealed that Roman and Medieval ports in both Northern and Eastern Europe utilized fill constructions described later during the Renaissance. This includes the documentation of shipwrecks used as fill in Amsterdam in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries (Baart et al. 1977:62). Although the Dutch obviously applied these engineering principles and brought them to the New World, conceivably they were also familiar to others, specifically to those living and working in New York City when land reclamation began on the 175 Water Street block. Among them were Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and the block's other water lot grantees.

Early Land Reclamation in New York City

Under the 1686 Dongan Charter, the City Corporation received all unappropriated land upon Manhattan Island to low water and filling in New York City began in earnest (Black 1891:17, Harris 1980:6). By 1692, the Corporation had collected £594 from the sale of East River water lots (Black 1891:19–21), and all the grants included directives to fill them in a prescribed manner and within a stipulated time frame (Peterson 1917:85). With the entire island now within the municipality's boundaries, the question arises as to why, beginning in the late-seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries, did the city's legislators, as well as merchants like Ann Elizabeth Schuyler, choose to cooperatively build out into the East River rather than expand north? And why did they choose the East River rather than the Hudson for the initial round of land reclamation?

Undoubtedly there were many deciding factors. Certainly, New York's powerful merchants, wishing to increase their land holdings, were instrumental in these decisions, and economic considerations, such as deepening and improving the harbor to augment trade, surely motivated this undertaking; but related issues, environmental as well as social and economic, also may have played a decisive role.

No other port along the North Atlantic coast was as well suited to transatlantic, coastal, and inland trade as New York (Albion 1939:16). With its two rivers (the Hudson and the East Rivers) meeting in a protected bay, it was ideal for maritime commerce. This was especially so given the sailing vessels that were the mainstay of commerce during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early-nineteenth centuries. The East River provided a safer berth than the Hudson, and the city's first wharf was built from the river's shore off Pearl Street in the vicinity of Whitehall Street by 1650 (Albion 1939:221; Stokes III 1918:989). A historian writing in 1756 noted that "the ships lie off in the road, on the east side of the town, which is docked out, and better built than the west side, because the freshets in the Hudson river [*sic*] fill it in some winters with ice" (William Smith cited in Valentine 1853:297).

Within 20 years of settlement, by the mid 1640s, ferries plied the East River between New York City on Manhattan Island and Brooklyn on the southern part of Long Island (Peterson 1917:139). With cattle, produce, and people coming from Long Island to the city, this interaction undoubtedly spurred the alteration and growth of Lower Manhattan.

Several other factors probably influenced the decision of Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and other land-makers to concentrate in this area. For one, the southern portion of the East River was better suited to development than its rockier shore to the north (Kardas and Larrabee 1980:17). And as long as attack from the north and from the interior by Indians and the French was a consideration—that is, until after 1760—consolidation of the city was a defensive mechanism (Stokes IV 1922:396–7, 449, 455, 533, 593). With defense and consolidation among the factors, and with the Hudson River the potential avenue of attack, the East River was the logical focus of commercial development.¹²

While there are no detailed or specific accounts of the eighteenth-century landfilling techniques used in lower Manhattan, historical documentation alerts archaeologists to what may be found. Not surprisingly, fill techniques incorporated European traditions based on those of antiquity. Ultimately, however, archaeological investigation of the 175 Water Street block documented technical variations and adaptations unique to the American situation, much as it documented the continuity of European tradition.

Among the clues to landfilling techniques are references in the Minutes of the Common Council to large pre-fabricated wooden constructions, such as wharfs "sunk" east of South Street to fill water lots (MCC II 1917:619; see also Waite and

¹²More recently, Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana Wall, in their book *Unearthing Gotham*, address this issue, noting that land was made where real estate was considered most valuable, that is, along the East River shore (Cantwell and Wall 2001:224).

Huey 1972:3). A later reference in the Council Minutes describes a timber box filled with stones to sink it (MCC I 1917:47–48). All of these procedures are variations on Vitruvian principles and the techniques employed or suggested by Renaissance engineers and architects. Among the available fill resources were the derelict ships that Scamozzi had indicated could be used as foundation footings (Brouwer 1980; Henn et al. c. 1978).

England, like most of Europe, had seriously depleted its wood supply long before American settlement. Therefore the extensive forests found in the New World were undoubtedly a welcome resource (Hindle 1975:3). The vast forests that then flourished¹³ provided construction material as well as fuel, and were the basis of early American technology (Hindle 1975:12); among these technologies was land reclamation. Although wood does not have the longevity of stone, when kept wet and deprived of air by submergence in water or wet earth, it will not rot (Greene 1917:4–5). Post-Renaissance Europe, where forests were depleted, employed wood as buffers between stone quays or wharfs and docking ships. In America, wharves were either made entirely of wood or had wooden facings. With its availability, relative longevity, and appropriateness as a building material, it is not surprising that wood became a major component of harbor construction in Lower Manhattan.

New York City's eighteenth-century engineers, or their colonial equivalent, not only had access to wood as a building material, but also conditions were such that land reclamation was part of an environmental process. In part, it was intrinsic to a river environment; in part, it was the direct result of urbanization and the requirements of a growing population. The former situation relates to prevailing conditions in the East River; the latter was an outgrowth of urban development with its attendant issues of providing facilities for trade, transportation, and sanitation. In the eighteenth century, expansion into the East River provided the city and Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and her fellow water lot grantees a solution to these problems.

Sedimentation and harbor build-up played an important part in the landfill process of maritime cities throughout history; for example, the medieval port of Bergen, Norway, is believed to have extended outward with the build-up of refuse dumped into the port over hundreds of years. In some areas of the Bergen waterfront, houses rest on 30 ft of compacted refuse, and over time, in addition to deliberate land building, the quay was extended as the land apparently filled naturally (Baart et al. 1977:29; Herteig 1959).

New York City's eighteenth-century records reveal that slips and docks required periodic dredging, indicating that the potential for inadvertent filling, similar to conditions in European cities, existed along its waterfront. The Minutes of the Common Council document that Burling Slip, now John Street, the 175 Water Street block's

¹³ Charles C. Mann, in his book, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (2005), makes the case that the extensive forests encountered by European settlers were not pristine. Instead, he believes they represent forest regrowth after formerly large native populations that had manipulated their environment were decimated by the European diseases that preceded actual settlement. Whether they were pristine or reinstated forests, the European settlers who came to the New World found a forest resource long unavailable in their native lands.

northern boundary, required cleaning and dredging at least four times between 1766 and 1772, and each of these cleanings ranged from 50 to 90 scow loads of material (MCC VII 1905:43, 119, 171, 368). Given the implied deposition of river silts and detritus in slips, the quantity to be removed is not surprising. In addition to sedimentation, cast-off debris and dumped sand and ballast from docked ships, as well as a refuse drain installed at Burling Slip in 1761 (MCC VI 1905:258), undoubtedly contributed to the build-up.

Initially, the dredged material from slip cleaning near 175 Water Street may have gone to other fill sites, just as cleaning of other slips (MCC V 1905:274), may have been used to partially fill the 175 Water Street block, but this is speculation. However, as part of the fill process, at some point the sediment and debris were allowed to accrue around the docks and piers erected to fulfill water lot grant stipulations.

Much of the material encountered archaeologically in backhoe tests used to determine river bottom at 175 Water Street—such as oyster shells from fishing industries and leather fragments from local tanneries (Valentine 1853:277–278)—probably represents harbor fill. Large bottle fragments, often with their necks still corded and wired suggesting breakage and discard, and wood chips, possibly related to ship building or repair, are typical of seaport refuse. The organic matrix of the block's general fill suggests street runoff or garbage laden with human or animal waste.

Besides harbor-related material, the block's deposits included the domestic garbage that was then a typical source of fill. This trash-laden soil, documented at harbor sites throughout Europe and the United States, incorporates relatively small sherds of glass and ceramics, kitchen trash, such as bone, fish scales, shell, or vegetal material, and other miscellany of discarded household debris. An occasional coin or dated bottle seal sometimes suggests a date for the deposit.

While varying in composition, the block's soil fill proved to be mainly brown to black to grey silts and sands.¹⁴ Analysis of ceramics and glass from these deposits indicated an on-going fill process structured by at least two engineering episodes. This process began when Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and her fellow water lot grantees allowed typical harbor fill to accumulate beginning in 1740 or 1750, and it ended sometime after 1780, but before 1795. This all became apparent when the primary, or original, fill on the 175 Water Street site basically proved to be trash and harbor-related accumulation; as noted previously, it is a fill found world-wide at harbor sites.

175 Water Street and Its Creators

To reiterate, creating the 175 Water Street block was the cooperative effort of Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and eight other water lot grantees. It meant allowing the soil to accumulate and fill the docking area around their newly constructed wharves and

¹⁴ See Geismar 1983:694–700 for detailed descriptions of the primary landfill levels documented during the 175 Water Street excavations.

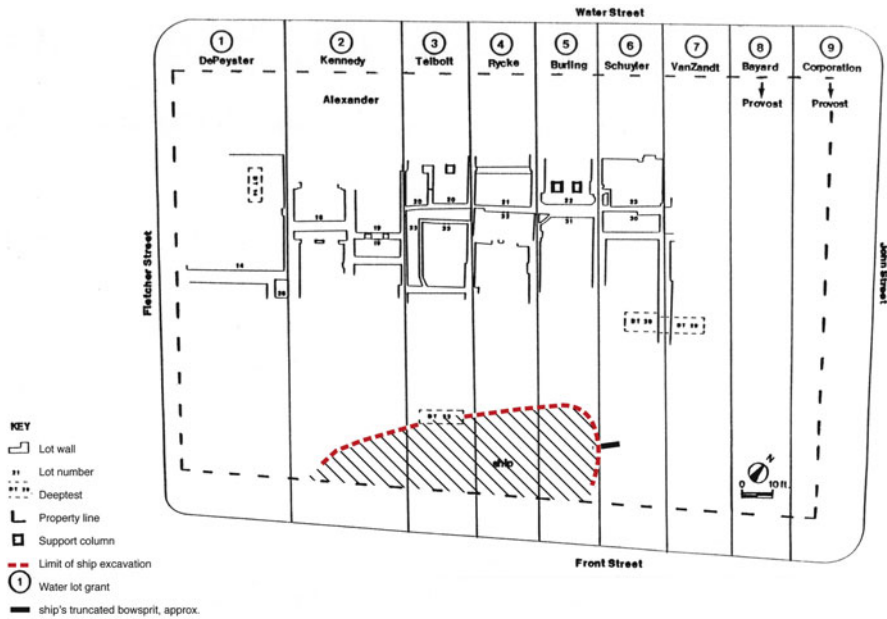


Fig. 7.3 175 Water Street excavation plan showing water lots, names of water lot grantees, and location of the “Ronson.” Note that the “Ronson’s” bowsprit extends into Lot 6, Ann Elizabeth Schuyler’s water lot. (Geismar 1983, enhanced)

piers that defined the block. Then, landfill in the form of city garbage was introduced to hasten the process.

Here, as elsewhere when land under water was reclaimed, a barrier was needed to hold the fill in and keep the water out. Usually, this was a timber crib, but archaeological investigation of the 175 Water Street block revealed that its water lot grantees chose to incorporate a 92-ft long and 24-ft wide derelict ship into the cribbing. The vessel, which structured the landfill across five individually owned water lots, including those of James Alexander and Archibald Kennedy, John Tiebout, Henry Rycke, Edward Burling, and Ann Elizabeth Schuyler, fulfilled water lot grant stipulations (Fig. 7.3). Based on the 9-year timeframe called for in their grants, the unnamed ship that served as cribbing was in place by 1746. At the far eastern edge of the five water lots, the derelict ship—her hull filled with the trash-laden soils found throughout the block—was tied into a timber crib of posts and planks.

The ship was discovered during backhoe excavations meant to determine the depth of the block’s landfill. The dirt fell away, exposing timbers that appeared to be cribbing that reused ship’s planks as documented archaeologically at a medieval site in the Netherlands (Baart et al. 1977:39) until it was found to curve out toward the river as it extended down. Further explorations under the direction of nautical



Fig. 7.4 The exposed bow of the “Ronson” covered with salt hay to prevent freezing during the record-breaking cold January of 1982. (Photo by Joan H. Geismar)

archaeologists Warren Riess and Sheli Smith revealed it was, instead, the midsection of the port side of a ship. Its configuration and well-preserved gun ports indicated the unidentified ship was a merchant vessel.¹⁵

Although the vessel’s starboard side extended under Front Street, where at least some of it presumably remains, her bow was entirely within the excavated area of the block. The exposed bow was covered with salt hay during the excavations to prevent freezing during one of the coldest Januaries on record. While this was not completely successful, it did succeed in making the excavated bow resemble a large, ungainly, hairy ogre (Fig. 7.4). The vessel’s truncated bowsprit extended onto Lot No. 6, the Schuyler water lot (see Fig. 7.3).

While the ship graphically documented cooperation among Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and the other water lot grantees to fill the block, it also revealed at least one of its former routes: tropical *teredo*, or shipworm, casings in the horsehair and tar sheathing that protected the hull indicate she had plied between the Caribbean and her final destination on the east side of Manhattan. The derelict ship, adapted as cribbing by British Colonials and apparently in place by 1746, has since been dubbed *The Ronson* after the block’s twentieth-century developer, coincidentally an Englishman.

Archaeological excavation also exposed the western edge of parallel log wharves that Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and the other water lot grantees had introduced on the Water Street side of the block. These, like the ship, apparently were in place by

¹⁵ See Riess and Smith in Geismar 1983:738–818 for details of the ship’s excavation and analysis.

Fig. 7.5 The stacked timbers of 175 Water Street's parallel wharf/grillage (right side of photo) exposed during construction-related activities in February 1982. (Photo by Joan H. Geismar)



1746. After the archaeological investigation ended, construction-related demolition revealed that the wharves were massive stacked-log blocks (Fig. 7.5) analogous to those found at medieval fill sites in Europe, such as the tenth- to fifteenth-century street strata excavated at Novograd in the former Soviet Union (Baart et al. 1977:15). It seems the eighteenth-century constructors of the 175 Water Street wharves, more than likely from countries where the wood supply had been decimated, reverted to an extravagant use of wood when it was again available in the New World.

In addition to finding the ship, the wharves, and the piers, over 310,000 artifacts were collected and tabulated from the archaeological excavations, as were approximately 17 tons of weighed animal bones, shells, and building material, all from the block's yard area. Dating these whole and fragmented objects revealed that it took more than half a century to completely fill the block, that is, beyond the lifetimes of the original water lot grantees, including that of Ann Elizabeth Schuyler.

The artifacts and the structural remains of the block's development—the backyard privy pits, water cisterns, sump drains, and building elements that included spread footers and timbers to support foundations in a wet environment (Fig. 7.6)—not only revealed the block's origins, but also its early development history. Excavated fill artifacts included items such as white clay wig curlers that must have maintained someone's fashionable wig, and a lead kosher seal that indicated the



Fig. 7.6 Spread footers (thick wood planks) straddling the western edge of the landfill and the eastern edge of the exposed logs of the wharf/grillage created by the mid-eighteenth-century water lot grantees, among them Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler. (Photo by Drew Pritzger in the author's collection)

presence of observant Jews among New York's early-eighteenth-century residents, again attesting to the city's diversity. This was in addition to the general detritus of commercial and domestic life in a seaport.

Surely Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and her fellow water lot grantees were not only aware of the value of creating viable land but also of the benefits of extending their docks and filled lots out into the river. In so doing, they deepened their dockage and accommodated bigger ships that could, in turn, bring them larger shipments.

Amy Friedlander, who conducted extensive historical research prior to archaeological field investigations, documented strong mercantile connections between Abraham DePeyster, James Alexander, and Ann Elizabeth Schuyler and identified them as "the most substantial individuals associated with the landfill of the site" (Friedlander in Geismar 1983:28). They all owned land adjacent to the 175 Water Street block, and several shared a business connection with the aforementioned Rodrigo Pacheco, who was a purveyor to many of New York's merchants.

Not only are most, if not all, of Ann Elizabeth's fellow water lot grantees among her customers, several were also the owners or part owners of ships mentioned in her account book and elsewhere: John Tiebout was part owner of the sloop *Mary and Margaret* (Friedlander in Geismar 1983:26), and various grantees of the block's water lots were associated with the *Carolina* and the *Albany*, as well as other ships noted in Schuyler's ledger. It seems that both Mrs. Schuyler and James Alexander were involved in coastal and West Indian (Caribbean) trade, and Alexander had

experience selling obsolete ships in London (Friedlander in Geismar 1983:29–30). This apparently was a common practice, and several of the block’s water lot grantees could easily have found, or may have owned, ships beyond repair that could have been used collectively as cribbing.

It is more than likely that Ann Elizabeth Schuyler’s filled lot became the location of a store or warehouse after a wharf had been constructed to extend Water Street and the block had been defined. By 1780 or thereabouts, long after Ann Elizabeth Schuyler’s death, the lot that was to bear the 175 Water Street address was occupied by a succession of ironmongers, then a cutler, followed by a merchant who dealt in looking glasses and also lived on the premises, and, in 1809, a china and glass “store” or warehouse. From at least 1816–1834, a brush maker occupied the lot. From 1834 to 1850, furriers and brush makers alternatively occupied the property (Friedlander in Geismar 1983:49–54). Artifacts from the lot included ceramics and glass that appear to date from the 1809 china and glass shop (Diamond and Stehling in Geismar 1983:455–457), as well as material for making brushes.

175 Water Street Today

The western half of Ann Elizabeth Schuyler’s water lot became 175 Water Street in 1795. In the 1840s, it was the address of a four-story structure that, like its neighbors, was demolished in 1957 to widen Water Street. For decades the entire block was a parking lot, but now 175 Water Street is the address of a 32-story office building that covers the block.

What remains of the ship, the wharves, the piers, the eighteenth-century fill, and the detritus of the nineteenth-century seaport, as well as any enduring evidence of commercial trade and domestic occupation, now lie under the office building. To look at it, no one would suspect this massive structure stands on what was originally part of the East River. Nor would they suspect that an eighteenth-century woman, Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler, was among those who created the block and literally shaped the city. While details of her life are somewhat sketchy, those that can be determined suggest she was a woman to be reckoned with and to be admired. Indeed, this eighteenth-century woman—wife, mother, widow, merchant, entrepreneur, land maker—was a prototypical woman of our time.

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Part III
Africans in New York

Chapter 8

Africans in New York, Historical Background

Meta F. Janowitz and Diane Dallal

Among the second group of non-Americans to sail into New York harbor, in 1525, 5 years after Giovanni da Verrazano, was a man of mixed African and Portuguese descent, Esteban Gómez (Moore 2005:33). People of African ancestry were among the first non-native settlers of Manhattan. A mulatto sailor, one Juan Rodriques, was either left by his Dutch captain or jumped ship on his own volition in 1613 carrying a quantity of trade goods. He spent at least the next year, and probably longer, among the Lenape and apparently learned enough of their language to act as an interpreter and go-between for later Dutch traders (Rink 1986:34, Moore 2005:34).

The Dutch West India Company (WIC), after 1621 the founders and governing power in New Netherland, brought the first enslaved Africans to New Amsterdam in 1626 (Swan 1993). The names by which some of these dozen or so men were identified show their origins: “Congo,” “San Tomé,” and “d’Angola.” Three enslaved women were brought to the town in 1628; according to WIC records, the women were “for the comfort of the Company’s Negro men” (quoted in Foote 2004:36). A generation later, during the 1640s wars with the Lenape, 11 enslaved African men petitioned the WIC for freedom for themselves and their wives, based on their years of service to the Company. In 1644 they were granted what was later called “half-freedom.” Part of then-Director-General Kieft’s rationalization for this action was that the men “were burthened with many children so that it is impossible for them to support their wives and children, as they have been accustomed to do, if they must continue in the Company’s service” (quoted in Burrows and Wallace 1999:33). Some of the men and a few women had recently been granted tracts of land at the outskirts

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of the town, acting as a buffer and first line of defense against enemies descending on the settlement from upper Manhattan. These semi-emancipated land holders had to pay an annual tribute in agricultural goods and had to work for the Company when required, although they were to be paid for this work. After the wars with the Lenape ended, more enslaved people were given the same half-freedom as recompense for their work during the war and their years of service to the WIC. Their children remained enslaved, creating a moral quandary for the WIC and the citizens of New Amsterdam, particularly because many of the parents had become Christians and had their children baptized (see Janowitz Chap. 5). In 1664, when the city was again under military threat, now from the English, some of the half-free sued for and received complete freedom for themselves and emancipation for their children.

The Dutch had been at war, both officially and semi-officially, with the Spanish empire throughout the early seventeenth century. The WIC itself realized large profits during its early years by capturing Spanish and Portuguese merchant ships and their cargoes, including enslaved Africans. Dutch merchants in general did not become major investors in the slave trade until the 1640s, after Dutch forces captured important Portuguese slave entrepôts on the west coast of Africa; the Dutch then became the major traders in captives from Angola and the Congo. The WIC merchants brought most of their captive Africans to Brazil and to the West Indies, especially after 1654 when Brazil was recaptured by the Portuguese, to work on the profitable sugar plantations there. WIC trade in enslaved Africans to New Amsterdam also increased after 1654, although, with one possible exception, numbers were never large until 1664 when 291 captives were brought in on one vessel (Foote 2004:36–37), but it is highly likely that not all of these captives remained in the city. The first privately financed slaving ship sailed from New Amsterdam in 1654, returning the next year with a cargo of possibly as many as 300 captives (Moore 2005:51). Thus New Amsterdam had a considerable number of Africans, both enslaved and free, among its heterogeneous population when it was taken over by the English in 1664: of the approximately 1,800 inhabitants, 300 were enslaved and 75 were free Africans, roughly 20% of the population (Burrows and Wallace 1999:126).

Under the Dutch the status of slaves was “never codified into law” nor formalized into chattel slavery (Goodfriend 1992:111). Enslaved people were subject to the same laws as free citizens, they could marry in the Dutch Reformed Church, own property, testify in court, and bear weapons when called upon in times of need; they were never a separate “pariah class” (Foote 2004:40). They farmed the WIC *bouweries* that supplied the Company’s employees with foodstuffs, built much of the city’s infrastructure, including the original palisade along Wall Street and the fort at the tip of the island, and served as soldiers, although they bore pikes and axes not firearms. New Amsterdam, like other North American colonial settlements, was chronically short of cheap labor, and, again like other colonies, the city found a solution in the labor of enslaved Africans.

Numbers of involuntary immigrants from Africa increased after the turn of the eighteenth century as New York’s population and demand for cheap labor grew exponentially. Between 1700 and 1725 about 2,400 captives were legally imported into the city; between 1725 and 1775 5,000 came. As Burrows and Wallace (1999:127) state “More blacks came involuntarily to New York in the eighteenth

century ... than whites came voluntarily in the seventeenth.” Many of these people came from the British colonies in the West Indies rather than directly from Africa. The English Royal African Company, which had a monopoly on the slave trade from Africa to the English colonies, carried most of its captives to the Caribbean but did not object to the shipment of enslaved people from there to New York, as it would increase demand in the West Indies: between 1701 and 1715, 209 captives came directly from Africa while 278 came from the West Indies (Goodfriend 1992:112–113). Some New York merchants also engaged in illegal trade with Madagascar, bringing numbers of East African people to the city during the 1690s, that decade of free-wheeling piratical trade in New York.

In spite of this quickening in the slave trade, the proportion of African-descended people in the city decreased slightly during the early eighteenth century because so many more Europeans were voluntarily immigrating to the city at the same time. Estimates by historians differ slightly, but Goodfriend (1992:113) states that the black population of New York City was 14% in 1703, 17% in 1712, 19% in 1723, and 18% in 1731. It increased again to about 21% by the mid-1740s, making New York the largest slave-owning city in the North, and second only to Charleston, South Carolina in all the colonies, with about half of the city’s households including one or more enslaved members (Burrows and Wallace 1999:127). Enslaved women and some men worked as domestic help while most men worked as manual laborers or for craftsmen.

Legal conditions for captive laborers worsened under English law. Blacks who had been emancipated under the Dutch continued free under English rule but the possibility of emancipation diminished. In 1702 the first wide-ranging slave code was enacted by the city government. It made an explicit connection between slavery and people of African origin and gave masters broad powers of coercion over their slaves. The problem of Christian slavery was resolved in 1706 when the colonial assembly passed an act ensuring that conversion to Christianity would not lead to freedom. Furthermore, it stated that any child born of an enslaved “Negro, Indian, Mulatto and Mestee” mother would be a slave (cited in Foote 2004:127), thus inextricably linking the condition of permanent enslavement to race. In 1711 a slave market and day hire center (slaves were often hired out to others when their masters had no work for them) were established at the “Meal Market” on Wall Street (Lepore 2005a:63). During this time, New Yorkers became alarmed by news of slave insurrections in the Caribbean and suspected that some rebellious slaves had been sold into the city. City authorities consequently lowered the tariff on slaves imported directly from Africa, with the result that 185 captives were brought to New York straight from Africa between 1710 and 1712 (Goodfriend 1992:124). The first organized revolt of enslaved blacks in New York City occurred in 1712, possibly as a consequence of this change in importation patterns. According to Goodfriend (1992:123), it “was not just a spontaneous reaction to oppression but an act rooted in preexistent cultural bonds” among the recent arrivals; it was based on their own culture’s rules for acceptable behavior between the enslaved and the enslaver, rules which New York masters neither knew about nor shared (Foote 2004:135–136). Many of the slaves involved came from among the newly arrived Africans, who placed reliance on the power of their natal gods to support them in their struggle against their masters.

Reliance on natal gods proved fruitless. The conspirators set fire to a building and ambushed those who came to put it out. Several whites were killed and others wounded before the garrison arrived. The rebels fled to the wooded areas of Manhattan but were soon captured, although six committed suicide before they could be apprehended. Seventy were put on trial and 25 were convicted of murder or its attempt. Twenty of the 25 were hanged and the rest subjected to severe tortures that—eventually—killed them (Burrows and Wallace 1999:148).

The city authorities reacted to this rebellion by enacting a new slave code that compiled and strengthened earlier statutes. Chattel slavery inherited through the maternal line was reiterated, enslavement of black Christians was reaffirmed, a separate penal code for slaves was promulgated, interactions between free blacks and slaves were formally limited, and masters were strongly discouraged from freeing their slaves through the imposition of heavy financial requirements. Brutality toward enslaved Africans became officially sanctioned and publically accepted.

In 1741 a series of fires led New Yorkers to the conclusion that there was a “Negro Plot” to burn down the city and murder its inhabitants. The existence and extent of this alleged conspiracy is a matter of historical debate but at the time it was considered a grave threat. Almost 200 people were arrested, most black but a few white; 17 blacks and 4 whites were hanged, 13 Africans were burned at the stake, and 70 were transported to the Caribbean. Whether the conspiracy was real in part or in whole, its aftermath left indelible memories for many New Yorkers, both black and white.

It was extremely hard for enslaved people to maintain ties of family and friendship with others, given their dispersed living conditions and the likelihood of being sold away to a different place. Some masters, for example, Cadwallader Colden, made it a point to separate children from their mothers in order to prevent the maintenance of strong familial connections (Lepore 2005a:66). The enslaved had no formal institutions which supported community ties. The African Burial Ground was perhaps the only place where blacks could congregate away from others and build their own communal identity (see LaRoche Chap. 9).

Legal and social conditions did not change significantly for blacks until the Revolution, when the British forces offered freedom to those who would fight for them (see Chap. 9). After the war, many formerly enslaved people left with the British. For those who stayed behind, conditions did not immediately improve. Population growth and expanding trade after the Revolution were again supported by an increase in the enslaved population. Between 1790 and 1800 the city’s enslaved population grew by 25% and more households included enslaved workers; three-quarters of the households who owned slaves in 1800 had not owned slaves in 1790, although the percentage of artisans who used slaves in their crafts had declined (Burrows and Wallace 1999:347). Proportions of free and enslaved blacks had changed, however, with over half of the city’s black population free by 1800, largely due to emancipation of individual slaves by New York masters. Meanwhile, the flood of European immigrants who came to the city caused the overall proportion of blacks to decline to less than 5% of Manhattan’s population at the turn of the century.

Support for slavery as an institution waned after the American and French Revolutions with their communal goal of liberty for all. In 1807, the United States

made the transatlantic slave trade illegal. In 1799, the New York State Legislature passed a resolution for gradual emancipation. The law was designed to minimize financial effects on slave owners and was very gradual indeed. Enslaved people would remain so for life but their children born after July 4, 1799 would be free, although they must remain in their mother's master's service until the age of 25 for women and 28 for men. Some slave owners responded by selling their slaves out of state, although this was illegal, while others entered into agreements with their slaves that allowed the latter to achieve early emancipation in exchange for a promise of future work. Slavery was finally made illegal in New York State in 1827. Black New Yorkers moved into the paid labor market largely as unskilled workers, although some, like Thomas Commeraw, a stoneware potter (Zipp), continued as independent craftsmen or became owners of shops or taverns. In New York as in other areas, emancipation did not mean equality in access to jobs or education, and even to religious institutions, as exemplified by the congregation of the Spring Street Church (see Chap. 18). Some of the worst times for black New Yorkers were the Civil War draft riots, as chronicled in Burrows and Wallace (1999) and Bernstein (1990), among others.

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Chapter 9

The African Burial Ground in the Age of Revolution: A Landscape in Transition

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Introduction

The landscape history of the African Burial Ground and the Common immediately to the south exposes the tensions between competing cultures and the evolving urban environment in the decades of change before and after the Revolutionary War. For a century prior to its closing in the mid-1790s, the African Burial Ground exemplified New York City's transformation from a small colonial port town, to the new nation's capital, to international hub. Situated in the midst of lower Manhattan where New York's free and enslaved Africans once came to bury their dead, the cemetery was in use from the late seventeenth through the late eighteenth centuries and functioned as the City's first black institution (see Thompson 1981). The site occupied a remote low-lying area south of the Fresh Water or Collect Pond north of the City's common lands. A ravine sloping east–northeast from a high point on Broadway toward the Collect defined the cemetery's topography, dictated its history, and ensured its contemporary reemergence.

As the city grew, the cemetery was sealed beneath 16–28 ft of fill which was used to alter the historic landscape, burying the site while raising the originally low-lying land to street level. The African Burial Ground site, which is located in lower Manhattan at Broadway, Duane, Elk, and Reade Streets, first came to public awareness in 1991 during the early phases of a construction project for a 34-story federal office building (Fig. 9.1).

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Fig. 9.1 Detail of Plan of the City of New York (1754) by Francis Marschalck. Maerschallck Map, published 1755. (Library of Congress)

Shifting Forms of Cultural Expression

Burial rites would have been a pressing concern among the enslaved workers first brought to New York either directly from Africa or by way of the Caribbean (Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2009; Berlin and Harris 2005). There is some evidence that Europeans first brought African captives into the colony as early as 1625 or 1626 although 1636 remains the more frequently cited date (McManus 1966:4). In either event, the enslaved population probably started forming a community concerned with burying their dead between 1640 and 1660. Early customs dictated the burial practices of the captives. Between 1697 and 1703, Anglican Trinity Church assumed management of the town cemetery after which time the Church banned burials of Africans there, mandating a separate burial place for New York's black population, free and enslaved (Medford 2009).

Although specific names have not been identified with the cemetery, the lives of those who would have come in contact with the burying ground while it was in use can be reconstructed. The mortuary tributes used to accompany the dead on their homegoing journey reveal shifting forms of cultural expression associated with the African captives who buried their dead in the lower Manhattan grave site. Artifacts lend individuality to specific burials beyond their biohistory, revealing the cultural transformations taking place all around the mourners.

Archaeological Remains

The landscape and topography of the African Burial Ground together with excavated artifacts and material culture locate the site within the diasporic system of cultural interaction stretching across four centuries. The nature of the artifacts recovered from the burying ground reflects the change from African cultural expression to artifacts associated with war and the British occupation of New York City. Beads and buttons buried with New York's earliest African population reveal not only change over time but also a sociocultural evolution from West African expressive forms to objects associated with the political upheaval of the Revolutionary War. During this time period, blacks in New York participated on the world stage at the international, cultural, and political crossroads of modern New York City.

Between 1700 and 1774, the African population in New York swelled as the British imported between 6,800 and 7,400 blacks into the colony (Berlin and Harris 2005). Perhaps between a one-fifth and a quarter of them remained in the City. With the exception of Charleston, South Carolina, New York had a higher proportion of Africans in its population for much of the colonial period which may be reflected in the burials at the Burial Ground (Perry et al. 2009).

Of the more than 400 burials recovered, 23 of the Africans buried at the cemetery had culturally modified teeth with intentional filing or chipping. The teeth were cultural markers intended to be viewed and appreciated for the form of the distinctive decorative patterns and styles (Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2009). Altered teeth, a

common practice among many African cultures, denoted the ethnic affiliations of colonial New York Africans while communicating aesthetic awareness and appreciation. These markings were found at the Newton Plantation archaeological site in Barbados as well, indicating that West Africans came to mainland North America and throughout the Diaspora with cultural and aesthetic expression in and on their bodies, specifically their teeth and perhaps through markings on their skin.

At the African Burial Ground, African cultural retentions were expressed in burial practices and tributes as well, most notably, but not limited to, a child wearing a silver earbob, an infant buried with a bead necklace, and one infant buried with a strand of waistbeads (LaRoche 1994, 2009). The deaths of infants and young children reflected the high infant mortality rate at the Burial Ground. These gloomy statistics do provide a rich source for understanding the early burial practices associated with the loss of children. They too received care and acknowledgment.

One compelling burial, Burial 340, a woman between 35 and 64 years of age, revealed direct African antecedents. She was buried with a strand of more than 112 beads mainly at the waist with a handful of cowry shells and a few yellow and green beads at her wrists (Fig. 9.2). In addition to her artifacts, her teeth also exhibited dental modification. Her lower right first incisor was modified to form a gradual bow-tie or hourglass shape, and her filed lower right lateral incisor appeared to have been modified to a point or peg-shape (Statistical Research Inc. 2009 LaRoche 1994:8).

As early as 1978, Handler and Lange excavated a comparable burial of a man at Newton Plantation described as an obeah man (Handler and Lange 1978). These ritualistic burials, one in New York City and the other in Barbados, reveal the mechanisms of retention and transference of West African cultural expressions. The male burial at Newton Plantation had been buried with cowry shells, and an elaborate necklace consisting of dog canines, glass beads, drilled vertebrae, and a magnificent carnelian bead. For both the New York burial and the burial of the obeah man in Barbados, the artifacts held meaning beyond their decorative and aesthetic value. The adornments signified status and were probably valued by the wearer for their spiritual potency, protective properties, and healing powers.

The presence of beads and other objects symbolize culture in transition. Waistbeads during this time period would have marked the individual as someone worthy of honor. The glass beads, cowries, and gold applied on glass beads contained on the strand signaled wealth or status and carried multiple layers of meaning for Africans in New York just as the wearing of gold beads signaled status among Europeans. It was customary in some seventeenth and eighteenth century West African societies to heirloom beads, passing them from mother to daughter or to granddaughter (LaRoche 1994). For reasons that we can only surmise, burying rather than heirlooming the beads perhaps represents disruption of traditional cultural practices. The act of burying the beads becomes a cultural metaphor for burying a way of life. The woman adorned with waistbeads probably experienced a culturally rich lifetime of deep spiritual meaning and healing power, ritually marked by important rites of passage that would not survive in colonial New York. Under the oppressive system of enslavement in eighteenth century New York the African

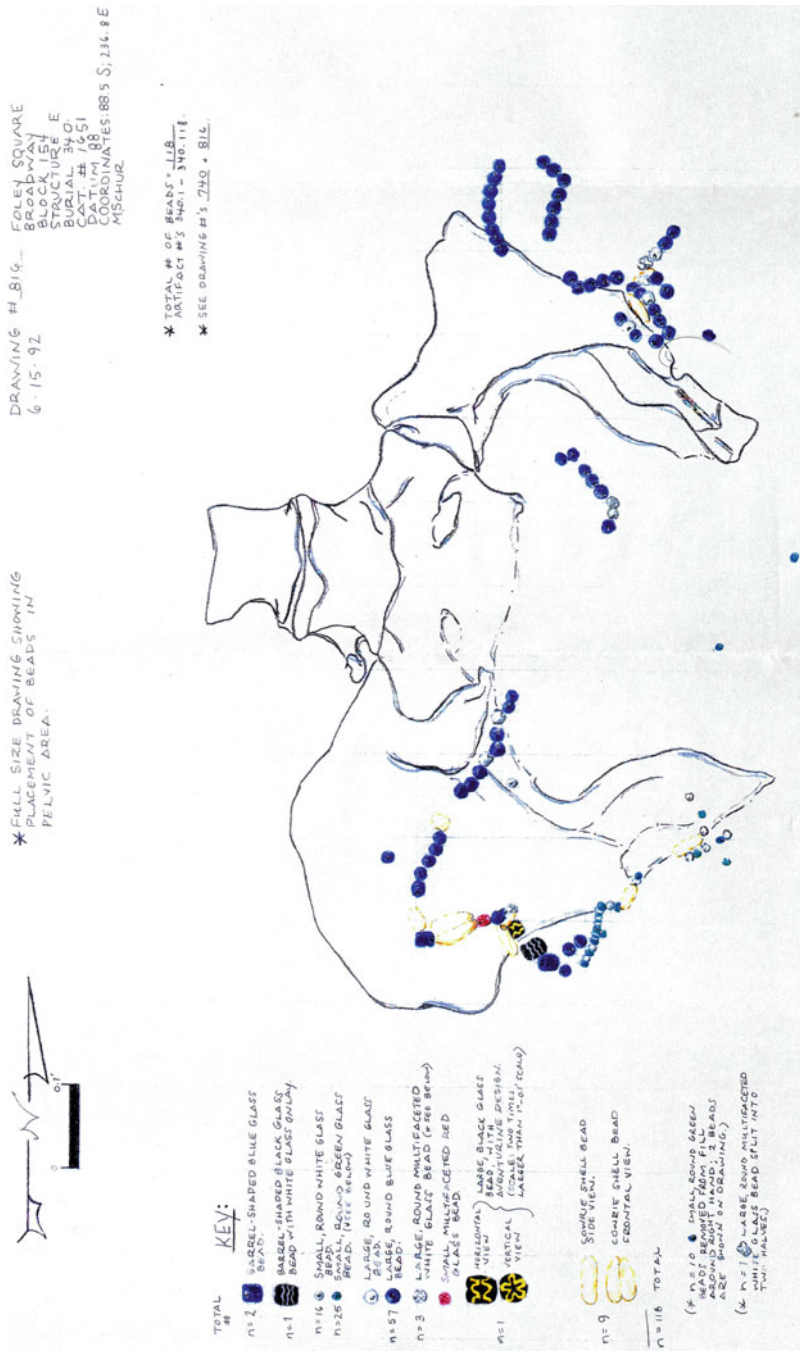


Fig. 9.2 Reproduction from LaRoche, "Glass Beads Excavated From The African Burial Ground, New York City: Conservation, Analysis and Interpretation" and Courtesy of the General Services Administration

captives buried their dead with beads and other articles of meaning suggestive of their West African cultural origins, paying homage in familiar ways (see Foote 2004:139, 142).

Artifacts of War and Occupation

Various types of British military buttons counterbalance the beaded adornment indicative of West Africa. The buttons, suggestive perhaps of the allegiances many blacks held to the loyalists and their promise of freedom, are distinctly different from the cultural markers indicative of African origins. Military buttons from this time period could have belonged to black soldiers or refugees. New York's black population was among the fighters and laborers who toiled for the British during the war. They also would have been the mourners burying their families, friends, and loved ones at the African Burial Ground.

Although Africans in colonial New York buried many of their dead simply, wrapped and pinned in burial shrouds, Burial 6, a man who died between the age of 25 and 30, was interred wearing street attire. He had an impressive array of eight buttons, five of which were apparently attached to a jacket or coat. The set included one polished and four gilt buttons in different sizes, bearing various impressed designs. Two of the buttons were impressed with fouled anchor insignias associated with the presence of the British Navy in New York after 1774 (LaRoche 2009:30,32) (Fig. 9.3).

Whether the buttons were a random set collected and worn solely for adornment, or indicative of a uniform jacket, or suggestive of political sympathies with the British, is difficult to determine. The buttons may signal the deceased man's affiliation with the British Navy as a sailor or pilot, a common occupation among blacks during the war. Buttons, however, were coveted for their decorative qualities and may have been obtained apart from the jacket they adorned. A high frequency of buttons is generally associated with African-American archaeological sites (Otto 1984; Kelso 2002; Samford 1996). The owner of the garment and buttons may have wished to proclaim his connections or associations with the British as a force of black liberation. Perhaps in one of the most illustrative demonstrations of cultural fusion, Burial 6, also had one culturally modified tooth, likely indicative of an African birth. His burial, remains, and associated artifacts demonstrate archaeology's power to reveal Africa in America as well as political sentiments in a world distended by slavery, torn by war, and buoyed by hopes of freedom.

More than a half-century before the war, military chaplain, John Sharpe visited New York City in 1712/1713 and commented on slave burials in the "Common Field" where funerary rites were being performed at the grave by African countrymen. He further observed Africans "being buried in the Common by those of their country and complexion" (Sharpe 1712/1713:355). Sharpe could not have seen the artifacts and tributes included with the burials that adorned the deceased as an aspect of those funerary rites.



Fig. 9.3 British Naval Officer's button recovered from Burial 6. (Courtesy of General Services Administration)

Since the 1730s at least, the Common grounds had been the site of public gatherings, celebrations, and festivals (Cooper 1990; Neville 1994; Epperson 1999). Perhaps before the enactment of restrictive legislation, a large, well-attended drumming filled nighttime funeral procession to the Burial Ground might have been commonplace, mirroring public displays of parades, processions, and the like, popular in other parts of the colonial Northeast (Stuckey 1994). Large corteges and pall-draped coffins were similarly banned in 1731 as were gatherings of more than “12 slaves...admitted by the owner of the dead slave” (Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York [MCC] IV, 1731:86–88). Such rulings suggest that large funeral gatherings by New York’s African captives were significant and worrisome enough to New York legislators to require their legal intervention.

That same year, of the 79 African deaths recorded in mortality listings, 50 died as a result of a devastating smallpox epidemic that ravaged the city; the disease was “the greatest single epidemic killer” during the years the African Burial Ground was in use (Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2009:260; Duffy 1968:34–35). These deaths would have further taxed the burial resources of the enslaved population. No longer able to utter their “mummeries and outcries” (Valentine 1860:567), African captives endured New York City’s restrictive legislation. As Foote (2004:140) observed, there was a low level of acculturation among New York blacks prior to 1760. The level of acculturation in combination with culturally restrictive legislation more than likely forced the Africans to move away from familiar forms of expression toward externally imposed, socially mandated mortuary tributes.

The Burying Place in Maps

The triangular plot of land that now forms City Hall Park remains the sole landform of the old public Common of which the Burial Ground was once a part. The Common land began at the southern end of the present City Hall Park, stretched to the north of the eighteenth-century town, terminating beyond the Burial Ground. Within the landscape of the Common, the cemetery had a distinctive topographic and geographic signature. It was originally bounded by the Collect or Fresh Water Pond to the northeast. Present-day Duane Street formed the northern boundary; Chambers Street, which now delineates the northern end of the Common, also perhaps comprised the southern boundary of the Burial Ground; Centre Street was to the East and Broadway eventually formed the western boundary.

Early maps of Lower Manhattan chronicle the transformation of the landscape of the Burial Ground foreshadowing the rise of the contemporary City from its pre-colonial and colonial beginnings, through the British occupation during the American Revolution. Ultimately, the new era ushered in by the end of the War in 1783 left a cartographic signature visible today despite the relentless uniformity of the modern New York City street plan.

Maps and other historical documents infuse the cultural landscape of the cemetery with detail. Throughout the pre-Revolutionary period, the city was quite small, never extending beyond a mile in width and a half-mile in length (Medford 2004:77). Although the ravine that formed the Burial Ground was a large and dominant landscape feature and a central space for Africans in New York, cartographers rarely labeled or overtly acknowledged its presence. Nevertheless, the landform was consistently recorded, if not labeled. As a result of faithfulness to the landscape, time and again, the presence and location of the Burial Ground can be identified on eighteenth century historic maps.

Moreover, mechanisms of power and dominance visible in the landscape come to the fore through a close reading of specific historic maps. By 1730 the Lyne-Bradford plan depicted a rope walk to the west of Broadway and a powder magazine on a small rise between the main Fresh Water Pond and Little Collect which was the smaller pond or swamp to its south. Although surrounding features were included in earlier maps, Mrs. Buchnerd's ca. 1732–1735 hand-drawn Plan was the first cartographic reference to the Negroes Burying Place southwest of the swamp below the Fresh Water pond (Cohen and Augustyn 1997:55,60–61; Stokes 1915:I, Pl. 30, n.d.). Mrs. Buchnerd's map was drawn a year or so before the City erected the almshouse in the approximate location of today's City Hall. The modern history of the site as municipal center and location of public institutions began with construction of the poorhouse, as it was popularly known. However, the City's tacit condoning of its African population using private land for public burials established the precedent.

The poor condition of the land relegated to New York's colonial Africans meant that the Burial Ground could not be the type of defined, protected sacred space commonly associated with cemeteries. Although the graveyard was within a mile of the southern tip of Manhattan, the burying place was sequestered beyond the limits of

the town, at times concealed from view beyond a 14-ft cedar-log defensive palisade erected ca. 1745. In the immediate area, access was restricted to one of four block-houses or palisade gates, 30 ft square and 10 ft high (Stokes 1915:IV). The palisade depicted in the Maerschallck map was more fortification than demarcation, running zigzag from the East River to Chambers Street on the Hudson. Over time, the cemetery shared its exclusion with the ropewalk, potteries, tan yards, turpentine manufacturers, powder magazine, and gallows in a zone of undesirable activities associated with punishment, and the sweated and noxious trades. The Maerschallck survey map was one of three to clearly label the “Negroes Burial Ground.”¹ By 1760, the palisades were taken down, granting unfettered access to the Commons and to the cemetery. For much of the century the land used by the New York’s black population to bury their dead was tangled in the Van Borsum patent dispute which may account for the Africans having at their disposal nearly 6 or 7 acres of remote and distant, albeit undesirable, lands available for their burial needs (see Janowitz, Chap. 5).

With the notable exception of the British Headquarters Map discussed below, few maps took the topography into account. Although the “Common” extended from present-day City Hall Park to the Fresh Water Pond, it is likely that the ravine played a significant role in the demarcation and use of the Burial Ground. Just south of the Fresh Water stood the highest elevations along the crest of the hill above the pond. Rising perhaps along the line of Broadway somewhat north of Chambers Street, the ridge marked the southern boundary of the Burial Ground, along the northern edge of what is now City Hall Park. At one time, the elevation of Broadway above the pond was depicted as a full hundred feet which helps to explain the survival of one of the nation’s most important archaeological discoveries.

Blacks were concerned with more than burial rites, however. The anxious, smoldering discontent slavery provoked led to an armed insurrection of enslaved Africans in April of 1712. Some of the conspirators were African born and used African practices to ensure loyalty among the group. Once the plot was uncovered and judgment passed, a special gallows constructed for 21 executions resulting from the revolt marked the first physical government presence on this portion of the Commons (Wood 1993; Neville 1994; Epperson 1999). More than likely, the Common area south of the Collect would have been the site used for both the executions and, if the bodies were buried at all, they are believed to have been buried in the African Burial Ground (Perry et al. 2009: 43–44).

The revolt had a lasting effect on lawmakers. In 1722 the Common Council began imposing restrictions on the manner and tone of commemoration and burial practices by passing a law confining the burial of all Negroes and Indians to “the South Side of the Fresh Water” during the day-light hours, prohibiting night gatherings and drumming altogether (MCC 1722:296), indications that Africans were holding on to their traditional forms of cultural expression.

A compelling historic event at the Commons was vividly recreated in The Grim Plan of 1743–1744. Drawn in 1813 by 76-year-old David Grim, the Plan recorded

¹In 1991, the name was officially changed to the African Burial Ground.



Fig. 9.4 Detail of *A Plan of the city and environs of New York: as they were in the years 1742–1744*, by David Grim. (Courtesy of the New York Public Library). Legend: 25. Block House; 43. Palisades; 55. Plot Negro’s burn’t here; 56. Plot Negro Gibbeted

one of the most important colonial rebellions of his youth. Grim’s memory of the Common shaped New York’s cartographic record by graphically depicting the consequences of slave revolt. In 1741, 154 enslaved New Yorkers were imprisoned; 30 were executed; 13 African men were burned at the stake; 17 were hanged; and 71 other suspected participants deported because of a conspiracy against the Crown. The legend of Grim’s map contains entries such as “Negroes Gibbeted here,” referring to the punishments meted after the 1741 revolt (Fig. 9.4).

Judge’s records indicate the executions took place between the Collect and the little Collect. Grim recalled that executions continued here for many years thereafter

(Neville 1994:57; Berlin and Harris 2005). Subsequent burials were interred in the nearby African Burial Ground although none of the skeletal remains bore evidence consistent with being burned at the stake until reduced to ashes or of being broken on the wheel, two types punishments inflicted on the conspirators (New York City Landmark Preservation Commission [NYCLPC] 1992:6; Cohen and Augustyn 1997:62; Perry et al. 2009).

The British View of New York

The Common and the land surrounding the burial ground continued to reflect the changing nation, through peace, tumult, rebellion, and war. The British occupied New York City from September 1776 until the war's end. The African Burial Ground site endured as an urban African-American cemetery for the burial of blacks, up until the last quarter of the eighteenth century despite it being surrounded by military conflict and British occupation.

For strategic purposes during the Revolutionary War period, the British thoroughly mapped New York and left an extraordinary cartographic record of the City and the State. Throughout the war, Royalists' extensive use of surveyors and engineers to chart the City transformed New York from one of the most poorly mapped American cities before the war to the most thoroughly mapped urban area of the United States by the war's end (Cohen and Augustyn 1997:84). Therefore the underrepresentation of the Burial Ground was twofold, resulting both from the general lack of maps of the City and from cartographers failure to annotate the site. General George Washington, as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, had been challenged by the undefined topography of the colonies and daunted by the lack of maps. The situation frequently forced him to rely on local inhabitants who generally knew the direction of roads and the course of the surrounding streams. Throughout the war, understanding of the American topography for the Atlantic seaboard remained poor and the interior was scarcely mapped at all (Freeman 1952:169–170).

The British Headquarters Map (Fig. 9.5) dating to about 1782 survives as one of the most important maps of New York ever drawn. The remarkably detailed rendering is the only extant, virtually complete record fully representing the original terrain and topography of the island at that time (Stokes 1915, I; Cohen and Augustyn 1997:85–87). The British, perhaps unencumbered by racial or cultural concerns, drew and labeled what was present and depicted the configuration of the Burial Ground during the Revolution when barracks were erected to the immediate south. The Headquarters Map is the most specific rendering of the cemetery although other later maps give a much clearer understanding of the ravine and hilly terrain. During their occupation, the British interred deceased prisoners of war and possibly other soldiers at the southern end of the site which is thought to be the burials depicted on the map in the area of the African Burying Ground (NYCLPC 1992:7; Historic Conservation and Interpretation [HCI] 1990:11–12).



Fig. 9.5 Detail of British Headquarters Map. Detail of B.F. Steven's facsimile of the unpublished British head quarters coloured manuscript map of New York & environs, (1782); reproduced from the original drawing in the War Office, London. (Courtesy of New-York Historical Society)

As indicated by the Headquarters Map, New York's enslaved Africans would have been at the center of Revolutionary New York, experiencing the birth of liberty yet caught between the British occupation and New York oppression while witnessing a country at the cross roads of transition.

The Common

Colonial era New Yorkers resorted to the open public space of the Common making it the literal and metaphoric center of celebration and protest in New York. Several liberty poles erected there were the rallying point and a prelude to revolution. The wedge-shaped plot of land also formed the symbolic core and the seat of governmental power in New York (Mason 1999:150). Throughout the eighteenth century use of the Common shifted from pasture to the site of public gatherings, communal celebrations, and festivals (Neville 1994; Stuckey 1994; Epperson 1999). As sentiment against the Crown grew in the years preceding the Revolutionary War, protest and dissention were building toward the liberty celebrations that would follow.

Increasingly, access to open public space was limited by construction of penal and welfare institutions such as the Gaol and Bridewell at the southern boundary of

the cemetery which by now was the northern edge of the Common. The poorhouse or almshouse, the first public building on the Common, was erected in 1736. With the exception of the barracks, control or punishment of criminals, vagrants, orphans, and the poor was the function of every building constructed on the Common by the City during the eighteenth century. By the end of the 1760s, the city further solidified its display of power through control and punishment by transferring the whipping post, stocks, and pillory from the Battery to the Common, and erecting them in the yard of the new jail (NYCLPC 1992).

Odious laws: the Sugar Act, the Tea Act, the Stamp Act, and the Quartering Act fueled noisy, radical, mob protest, which led to the first bloodshed in conflict in August 1766. For the nascent New York patriots, particularly the Sons of Liberty, the Common was the center of resistance in the years before the war. Frequent mass meetings and demonstrations, sometimes nightly, were the norm. Burnings and hanging in effigy of persons connected with the hated Stamp Act were the result. Rebel critics formed the Sons of Liberty and held daily drills on the Common. Straining under royal policies in New York City and chaffing under British rule, the Sons of Liberty demonstrated their displeasure at the time by erecting a liberty pole in the Common (Stokes 1915:IV; Anonymous 1770; Son of Liberty 1770). That same year, two regiments of occupying British troops were billeted in barracks built on the Common along the south side of Chambers Street in 1757 as well as in preexisting structures also on the Common just south of the pond (Neville 1994). The 420-ft-long barracks may have effectively created a permanent southern boundary of the Burial Ground (Barto 1992).

Between 1766 and 1776, New York patriots built ever more substantial liberty poles which British soldiers consistently dismantled. No less than five liberty poles were erected in symbolic defiance and torn or cut down in succession by the British. Activist, symbolic use of the Common was not restricted to patriotic acts. The Crown also sought control of the space. On June 4, 1766, with English flag aloft in celebration of the anniversary of the king's birthday, loyalists observed a band playing "God Save the King" as part of a great jubilee celebration on the Common. They, too, erected a pole (Ulmann 1901:84).

New York Patriots erected a fifth and final liberty pole, bound and fastened with iron bars and braces, looming 46 ft in the air, topped by a 22-ft mast, and mounted with a gilt vane emblazoned with the word liberty (Ulmann 1901:84; NYCLPC 1992) (Fig. 9.6).

The pole loomed over the Commons until the British captured New York in 1776. Blacks burying their dead within a few hundred yards to the north would have witnessed and contemplated the irony of the rhetoric of liberty that was taking place all around them denigrating the "tyrant" for attempting to "enslave" the citizenry (Brutus 1770). John Adams viewed oppressed whites as "the most abject sort of slaves" and their British enslavers as "the worst sort of masters" (Higginbotham 1978:375).

By January 1770, New York's Battle of Golden Hill² climaxed a long series of street brawls between New Yorkers and the redcoats which resulted, in part, from British

² Along present day John Street.

Fig. 9.6 Charles MacKubin Lefferts. *Fifth Liberty Pole on the New York Commons*, before 1920, Broadway at Park Place. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society)



soldiers cutting down the earliest liberty pole (Schlesinger 1955:245). The battle marked a significant clash between citizens and British troops where blood was shed, pushing the colonies ever closer toward revolution. Escalating skirmishes and clashes between British soldiers and New Yorkers again centered on the Common adjacent to the cemetery. These conflicts preceded the Boston Massacre by more than a year.

In New York City in the months leading up to the conflict, Washington had to contend with disaffected, dangerous persons and Tory sympathizers in the colony—treachery, mutiny, sedition, plots, allegiances, and alliances with the enemy. Indeed,

African Americans played an important role spying for both the British and the Americans during both the pre-revolutionary and Revolutionary War periods. As the legislature grew increasingly alarmed, restrictions were again placed on the colony's African Americans. Concern for illicit assemblies of blacks led to issuance of instructions to apprehend any group of blacks appearing after dark.

The closer war loomed, the greater the number of escapees fleeing to New York and New Jersey. Throughout the war, the City would become a haven for escaped slaves from many of the colonies. By 1775 patrols and preemptive arrests awaited blacks venturing forth before sunrise and after dusk. Floggings, hanging in chains, and the gruesome display of heads after execution, punishments not unfamiliar to New York blacks, increasingly were used by the Americans as deterrents to revolt (Foote 2004; Schama 2006:17,110–111). Certainly, the royal governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore's Proclamation in late November or early December 1775 offering freedom to runaways who fled to and fought with the British must have heightened both tensions and alarm.

At 6 P.M., July 9, 1776, 1 month before the British occupation of New York began, the first New York reading of the Declaration of Independence took place on the Common in close proximity to the Burial Ground. Washington ordered several brigades "be drawn up this evening on their respective Parades" when the Declaration of Independence was to be read out loud "in an audible voice." Washington assembled his troops near the Liberty pole as several brigades of the Continental army heard the reading along with the Patriots (Ulmann 1901:96). The brigades were formed in hollow squares, rectangular military formations on their respective parades where the troops would regularly assemble for inspection or display. The grounds of the Commons was the site of such an encampment. War veteran, Zackariah Greene, chaplain of the brigade encamped on the Commons, reported in his eyewitness account years later that, "the hollow square was formed at about the spot where the Park Fountain now is." He further noted that "Washington was within the square, on horseback," and that the declaration was read in a clear voice by one of his aides (Hazelton 1906:252–253; Lossing 1872:446).

The African Burial Ground stood a short distance away, at the edge of this historic event. More than likely a very concerned and interested African-American population listened as well and perhaps received for themselves, "the fresh incentive...to act with fidelity and courage" Washington hoped the reading would inspire among his troops (Freeman 1951:133–134). That same night after attending the reading, a noisy crowd moved from the Common, down Broadway to Bowling Green where blacks, with Patriotic fervor, participated in tearing down the equestrian statue of King George III.

Early in 1776, the Common south of the Burial Ground became the camp of the American troops, including Alexander Hamilton and his artillery command, during their relatively short sojourn before New York was overtaken by the British. The level of authoritarian control over the area and the concentration of disciplinary power peaked during the British occupation of the City in the first years of the Revolutionary War. Large numbers of American prisoners-of-war were held there. In addition to British who housed troops in barracks on the Common, the Crown also sought control of the space (Neville 1994:58–59; Medford 2004:12).

New York Blacks in the Age of Revolution

Lord Dunmore's 1775 Proclamation, offering freedom to blacks fighting with the British, shaped the tone and tenor of the war for General Washington, while simultaneously offering hope to thousands of enslaved Americans. In September 1776, 9,000 troops from Nova Scotia, 10,000 Hessian fighters, 30,000 British soldiers, and several hundred black refugees from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia who were with them, amassed to join forces under British commander General Howe. They converged on the City, overwhelmed the Patriot forces and took New York from George Washington's Continental Army (Pybus 2006). As a result of the Proclamation, as many as 800 blacks, including the remnant of Dunmore's own Ethiopian Regiment, fought with the British, or more accurately against the Americans and the certitude of enslavement, for control of Brooklyn Heights at the battle of Long Island. Participation of the Scots, the French under Lafayette, Haitian, Polish, and other foreign soldiers who later joined the fight must be factored into these figures. Blacks willingly joined the multinational conflict that expanded from a colonial battle into a transnational fight for freedom rife with global implications. Blacks who fought in the American Revolution went on to take what they had learned in the fight for liberty into the Haitian Revolution.

New York became the headquarters for the British in North America. Within less than a week after their arrival and the subsequent withdrawal of the Continental army, disgruntled Patriots appeared to set fire to the western side of the city, leaving behind desolation and smoldering rubble three-quarters of a mile long. A second fire, 2 years later continued the devastation. Charred remains of buildings were left standing; very little rebuilding took place.

The majority of the New York population of 16,000–20,000 had fled; some leaving their once enslaved captives behind to fend for themselves. Jacob Duryee hastily vacated his property for the Patriot-controlled state of New Jersey. He left his enslaved worker, Frank, to look after his interests. Rather, Frank took care of his own interests, married a free woman, and negotiated work with the British as a free man (Pybus 2006:25).

The black population of New York City swelled during the British occupation. Responding to Lord Dunmore's offer of freedom to all who were currently held in slavery and willing to serve His Majesty's forces, thousands of refugees, runaways, enslaved Africans confiscated from the patriots, enslaved workers brought in by loyalists, and black loyalists fighting with the British descended on the city. The 1779 British military census indicates that as many as 12,000 runaways found sanctuary in the City (Foote 2004:212). The enslaved people who had been left behind combined with blacks arriving into New York with the British army. They would have known of Dunmore's bold slogan, "Liberty to Slaves" embroidered onto the breasts of 300 uniforms for the Ethiopian Regiment.

If blacks had skills to help rebuild the damaged city, these self-manumitted workers found themselves in high demand. Civil departments of the army created corps of Black Pioneers to satisfy the voracious need for labor to provide the logistical support necessary for a large army. Many of the black recruits of Lord Dunmore's

Ethiopian Regiment, including runaway Jack who found work with the Wagon Master General's Department, Nathaniel Snowball, Harry Washington who had escaped from Mt. Vernon, and Ralph Henry who fled enslavement under Patrick Henry, joined the Royal Artillery Department (Pybus 2006:26–27).

After the fire, accommodations were in seriously short supply and housing for soldiers was scattered throughout the City. Some of the militia were billeted in barracks on the Common while others were sheltered in private homes appropriated for army use. At the same time, many escaped blacks lived in "Canvas Town," which was nothing more than sailcloth canvas wrapped around the empty and charred remains of burned out buildings, or tents in fields west of Broadway, while others were crammed in overcrowded "Negro Barracks" some in the vicinity of upper Broadway (Clifford 1999:29; Schama 2006:112).

By the time the British entered and occupied New York City in September, the Burial Ground had been in use for more than three-quarters of a century, eventually occupying upwards of 7 acres. Ultimately, this would become the final resting place for an estimated 20,000 or more African men, women, and children. The British now exploited the Common as a site of control and punishment, using the New Gaol, a jail for debtors, along with the Bridewell, to confine American prisoners of war. Torture and abuse were frequent in all three, but in the Bridewell with its barred, unprotected windows, 1,000 died of exposure. The British buried deserters and prisoners of war behind the barracks, marking the landscape as both a politically and culturally sensitive area. These burials were apparently limited to the southern portion of the cemetery between present-day Chambers and Reade Streets (Stokes 1915:IV, 394).

The northern portion of the graveyard used by the British during the occupation may contain burials of individuals from outside the local community. The British were particularly brutal to the Patriots. Four thousand captured Americans died in the "Martyr's Prison" (Old Gaol) under post-1776 British occupation. The combination of the conditions of the City, the war, the extreme winter of 1779–1780, and the appalling health conditions in New York at the time, particularly the yellow fever epidemic, would have escalated the death toll. During this period of the war, more men died from diseases such as cholera, dysentery, and smallpox than from wounds received in battle. No matter what the cause of death or where they resided, however, blacks who died during the occupation had few burial choices other than the African Burial Ground (Perry et al. 2009).

Earning Freedom in New York

Black refugees from the southern states and New York's own enslaved and free black population served in military, naval, and civilian labor capacities on both sides during the Revolutionary era. Many African Americans, such as Agrippa Hull and Prince Hall, sided with the Patriot cause. Had General Washington shown greater interest in recruiting blacks for the fight or displayed a willingness to ensure freedom from slavery for their efforts, undoubtedly more blacks would have fought for the Continental Army.

Black fighters had turned to the British in their quest for freedom from slavery. The Ethiopian Regiment and the Black Brigade—Loyalist African-American soldiers waging war alongside the British—had fought many battles on New York soil. The Royalists continued to reinforce and affirm their position towards blacks who fought for the Crown. In June of 1779, General Clinton ordered that black soldiers or auxiliaries be purchased for public service whenever captured. He then forbade any person from selling or claiming any enemy-owned slave who sought refuge in the British lines. Furthermore, he promised every black deserter from an enemy slaveholder full security to follow whatever occupation desired while with the British (Quarles 1996:113). In response, New York Patriots began recruiting from among the enslaved in March 1781. The Legislature of New York passed an Act granting freedom to all slaves who should serve in the army for 3 years or until discharged.

Both the Continental forces and the Loyalists sought their services; the English made multiple uses of the Africans. Spying, intrigue, clandestine, traitorous operations, and particularly guerilla attacks were often undertaken by African Americans. Benjamin Whitecuff, freeborn in Hempstead, Long Island, served as a sailor in the Royal Navy. For 2 years he also acted as a spy in New Jersey for General Clinton, traveling unobtrusively around New Jersey then returning to New York, gathering information about Patriot military activity. He was twice captured and nearly executed by the Americans (Hodges 1999:148; Pybus 2006:218; Quarles 1996). James Lafayette, the most notable of the black American master spies, worked for the French major general, the Marquis de Lafayette (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989:39). Colonel Tye also rendered effective service to the Loyalists. Tye joined the British forces and became a member of the Ethiopian Regiment after Lord Dunmore's Declaration and then led several successful raids against the patriots in New Jersey. Under his leadership, the Black Brigade played a key role in protecting vulnerable New York from Patriot incursions (Hodges 1997:97–104). Black men such as John Thompson served as couriers who kept the Loyalist mayor of the city in communication with the governor and his secretary who maintained the royal government from two warships moored off Sandy Point. Thompson was betrayed by deserting sailors and later jailed and taken to New Jersey where he was kept in chains for several months. Thompson, along with ten other black men, managed to escape and get to the British on Staten Island (Pybus 2006).

Black Life in Occupied New York

By all accounts, life in occupied New York was challenging for everyone; food was scarce and expensive; the City had been burned out twice by massive fires; disease was an ever present threat; living conditions were abysmal; and skilled labor was in high demand. And in the midst of this hardship, the British were actively recruiting runaways. By assuring African Americans their freedom by serving with British forces, the Loyalists inserted African Americans as the third party of the War while

depriving Americans of badly needed enslaved labor. Service to the Crown meant blacks were to receive the equal pay, the same quality of clothing, provisions, and munitions as their British counterparts. The British offered various forms of compensation to African Americans to work as laborers, teamsters, guards, harbor pilots, and spies as well as interpreters to Native Americans aides, and personal servants to officers (Braisted 1999; Hodges 1999; Pulis 1999). Black artisans, craftsmen, carpenters, and other skilled laborers worked on rebuilding the burned out city and in the naval yards. They constructed massive earthworks around the city; pilots guided the ships; black teamsters hauled provisions and collected firewood; black nurses and orderlies staffed the hospitals; black laundresses and needlewomen were able to support themselves; black fiddlers and banjo players entertained at balls and taverns while black trumpeters were attached to the provincial cavalry; and drummers served the infantry. It was common at that time for armies to be accompanied by a proportion of family members who assisted their regiments in washing, camp duties, as well as serving as nurses in hospitals (Braisted 1999:14). Black cooks, servants, and valets were always in demand (Pybus 2006).

Freedom: The Aftermath of War

As had been promised by the Americans, those enslaved New Yorkers who had supported independence received their reward of freedom and were immediately to be declared a free man of this state (Higginbotham 1978:138). Years later, New York black abolitionist, Henry Highland Garnet (Nell 1855:150) speaking at the 1840 anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society commented, "It is with pride that I remember, that in the earliest attempts to establish democracy in this hemisphere, colored men stood by the side of your fathers, and shared with them the toils of the Revolution." The War offered black men an opportunity to fight for the freedom and education of their families and the end of slavery.

By the time of the British admission of defeat, New York had been the city held longest by the British. Sir Guy Carlton had replaced General Clinton and thousands of Loyalists began evacuating the City. As would be the case after the Civil War, African Americans had seized the opportunity to reunite with family and had formed communities in British controlled areas of New York. Concern for family had been a major motivator among escapees. Husbands and wives often had attempted to escape together. The black population of New York expanded to nearly 4,000 on the eve of the evacuation transforming New York "into one of the largest free black communities in the Americas" by 1783 (Pulis 1999:xv). Observers in New York commented "that a distinctly black or 'Ethiopian' society developed that enabled African Americans to reconstitute families with both intergenerational and extra-kinship relations" (Pulis 1999:xv).

With the eventual defeat of the British, blacks who had been loyal to the Crown expected the freedom promised by Dunmore's Proclamation and dangled before

them in exchange for their fighting support. Other blacks in the North achieved freedom as an incidental result of the confiscation of loyalist estates. Local New York governments often liberated the enslaved workers of departed loyalists during the war and by 1784 the legislature declared loyalist masters had forfeited their enslaved workers. Hundreds of enslaved men and women either had taken advantage of the chaos of war to obtain their freedom from oppression or, when they could, left with the British. Thousands of African captives and runaways secured their freedom in this way. Undoubtedly, the black inhabitants of lower Manhattan who used the African Burial Ground knew of Dunmore's promise of freedom to black loyalists who fought and were now evacuating from New York ports with the British.

Nevertheless, freedom continued to be tenuous for those blacks enslaved by Loyalists. In the states south of the Mason Dixon line most confiscated slaves of loyalists were sold at public auction by the Americans for the benefit of the state (Quarles 1996:185). Participation in the war that was raging around occupied New York did not guarantee freedom, however. Before the British embarked at Whitehall and evacuated from lower Manhattan, many slave owners made their way to the City attempting to lay claim to their runaways. Simon Lee, the maternal grandfather of noted black abolitionist William Wells Brown, had been enslaved in Virginia. He had fought for the patriots in the Revolutionary War and subsequently honorably discharged with the other Virginia troops at the close of the war. Despite his years of service, however, he was remanded back into slavery where he spent the remainder of his life toiling on a tobacco plantation. "Such is the want of justice toward the colored American, that, after serving in his country's struggles for freedom, he is doomed to fill the grave of a slave!" (Nell 1855:223).

The Evacuation of New York

Blacks evacuating New York City cited three British proclamations by Lord Dunmore, Sir William Howe, and Sir Henry Clinton as inspiring their defection. Of the New Yorkers who set sail with the British, the majority had come to New York with the Royalist troops years earlier, often in response to a British proclamation. Free-born blacks and those who either purchased or were granted freedom also set sail. Several refugees had been in New York since the beginnings of the conflict, 7 years earlier.

In the 30 months after the British defeat at Yorktown, the primary concern of the Americans was the disappearance of enslaved workers. Many southern slaveholders either came themselves or sent their agents to New York to seize their former slaves in anticipation of the peace agreement. Whenever and wherever the British made their final withdrawals, blacks went with them. Such was the case to the very last moments of the British occupation and evacuation of New York in 1783. Despite George Washington's efforts to have the escapees returned, Carleton refused, noting

that any surrender of fugitives would constitute a violation of faith between the English and the black loyalists. Carleton's refusal set in motion a 30-year dispute between the two nations. For more than a century, Evacuation Day was celebrated as a New York City holiday in honor of the day when the British military ended its 7-year long occupation of the city. On November 30, New York was the last of all ports evacuated. When the British forces and the Loyalists withdrew from the city the names of the black evacuees had been carefully recorded in the "Book of Negroes." In honoring the three successive pledges of freedom to blacks who came over to the British, General Sir Guy Carleton, Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces, managed to evacuate 4,000 black men, women, and children on roughly 81 vessels out of New York harbor (Foote 2004:217). Many of the evacuees had recently been enslaved in the southern colonies. Anyone who had spent less than a year within the British lines, however, was turned away (Clifford 1999:35). Among the black loyalists were long-term New York residents who had been enslaved by the city's most prominent and successful merchants. Free-born blacks as well as those who had purchased their freedom also left with the British (Medford 2004:207–208). These freedom seekers constituted "the first mass group of emancipated African Americans" (Hodges 1996:xii).

Much to the consternation of General Washington and widespread, enduring vexation and indignation, the British, particularly Carleton, steadfastly argued against returning to the Americans, and thus to slavery, the blacks who had escaped to the Royalist lines or had fought for the loyalist cause. At least 30,000 blacks had escaped from Virginia plantations alone (Schama 2006:8); Landon Carter was exasperated by the loss of at least 15 of his enslaved workers who "ran off to Dunmore" (Clifford 1999:26). New York's black population would have known of no less than 5,000 black loyalists, women and men frequently accompanied by their children who had sided with the British in exchange for their freedom. Another 3,000 or more individuals embarked on 14 transports and sailed out of New York harbor on the way to Nova Scotia with the Royal Navy that November day. These figures do not reflect the hundreds of unregistered escapees who left New York as well as other ports on board private vessels. Quarles (1996) estimates that upwards of 15,000 blacks claimed their freedom by evacuating with the British alone. Perhaps another 5,000 had left previously with the French. However, the sick, the aged, the helpless, and the infirmed were left behind and abandoned by the British (Quarles 1996).

After the final peace treaty had been signed and General Washington led his army on the triumphal victory march through the streets of lower Manhattan packed with throngs of jubilant Patriots, it was with the clear knowledge that he could command a victorious army but could not completely dominate those he had enslaved. One of his favorites, Henry Washington, exemplified the Diaspora. He had been born in West Africa, enslaved at Mt. Vernon, fled to the British lines at the first chance, later evacuated to Birchtown aboard *L'Abondance* with other black loyalists before eventually settling in Sierra Leone. From the *Concord*, one of the evacuating ships in New York harbor, Washington's former slave Daniel Payne may have anticipated

his future life as a freeman in Nova Scotia while watching the fireworks that marked the general's victory. New York harbor was a long way from Washington's Mount Vernon where Payne had been enslaved 3 years earlier. Thirty of Thomas Jefferson's enslaved captives fled Monticello. Likewise Patrick Henry's runaway Ralph Henry took his former enslaver's words, "Give me Liberty or give me death" to heart (Schama 2006:9). Ralph escaped to the British at his earliest opportunity. He, his wife Miney, and Molly, their 4-year-old daughter left aboard the *Danger* (Pybus 2006:72). Nathaniel Snowball evacuated with his wife Violet and son, Nathaniel. The great men, the leaders of the Revolution, may have won the war but could not extinguish the flame of liberty they helped ignite in the hearts and minds of Americans, black as well as white.

Not only did blacks find refuge with the British in Nova Scotia, they sailed to Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Augustine, Halifax, and England from the southern ports. John Provey went to England with the Duke of Northumberland in 1778; Benjamin Whitecuff, the twice captured spy for the British, traveled back to England (Pybus 2006:27–28). One of the most notable of the evacuees was George Liele, founder of the first Baptist church at Silver Bluff, Georgia. Liele was taken to Jamaica where he earned his freedom, continued the religious work he had begun in Georgia, and organized the only Baptist church on the island (Quarles 1996:177). His co-founder, ordained preacher David George, along with his family evacuated to Halifax where he established three other Baptist churches in the vicinity. As was the case for so many others, George eventually sought to return to Africa. In 1791, he, his wife, Phillis, and their six children left for Sierra Leone (Pybus 2006:210).

The Black Pioneers were among the last of the Provincials remaining in New York in 1783. "Nearly all black workers on the musters of the Royal Artillery Department and the Wagon Master General's Department were kept on the job right up to final embarkation and were among the very last to go on November 23, 1783, when the final vestiges of the British army departed to join the evacuation fleet waiting off Staten Island" (Pybus 2006:71). Upon leaving, the majority of the blacks made their way to Birchtown, a new settlement in Nova Scotia, named in honor of Brigadier General Samuel Birch, the last commandant of New York City, who provided the passes that ensured safe passage out of America away from the danger of being returned to slavery. Among the black loyalists, the Black Pioneers, escapees from North and South Carolina and Georgia who had served under British General Henry Clinton, were disbanded in Nova Scotia, thus ending their military service. Finding themselves enmeshed in further struggle and protracted disputes, the men received free grants of land, although in much smaller amounts in comparison to their white counterparts.

The burial ground reflected the dramatic changes in the City. Roughly 2 years after the evacuation, the cemetery was closed. Many thought slavery in New York City might end with the removal of thousands of former slaves during the evacuation of the British. The City had been the last outpost of the Revolutionary War. However, the temporary drop in the enslaved population was not enough to fundamentally undermine slavery in New York.

Erasure from the Landscape

Eventually, by the second quarter of the eighteenth century the growing city began to overtake the grave site. Gradually, in a little more than a decade after the British defeat, as New York recovered from the wounds of war, the modern city began to take shape and emerge from the devastation. The cemetery, where blacks had buried their dead for almost a century, where the British had also interred war dead, and where New York blacks and war refugees paid their final respects to their fellow countrymen and women, was closed. By the time of the Taylor and Roberts 1787 survey map, traces of the African Burial Ground and its signature ravine began to vanish from the landscape.

By 1800, graves and other burials in the same vicinity were being exposed by rain-water runoff. As a boy, naturalist Issachar Cozzens (1843:22) remembered many times seeing “remains pulled out and abused by my thoughtless companions—as late as 1800.” William C. Nell, one of America’s first black historians, also had much to say in 1855 about earlier disturbances of the African Burial Ground. Nell quoted white abolitionist Theodore Parker who observed that during the excavations on the east side of Broadway from Chambers to Reade Street for the vaults for the great dry goods store, A. T. Stewart,³ “a gentleman from Boston noticed a large quantity of human bones thrown up by the workmen. . . They were shoveled up with the earth . . . carted off and emptied into the sea to fill up a chasm, and make the foundation of a warehouse” (Nell 1855:151–152). Nell commented that on inquiry, “the Bostonian learned that these were the bones of colored American soldiers, who fell in the disastrous battles of Long Island, in 1776.” He was present to the irony of blacks and the whites fighting against “the same enemy, under the same banner, contending for the same ‘unalienable right’ to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. . . but in the grave, they must be divided.” Seventy-five years later, “the bones of these forgotten victims of the Revolution are shoveled up by Irish laborers, carted off, and shot into the sea, as the rubbish of the town” (Nell 1855: 152).

Ownership of the land occupied by the Burial Ground had been disputed continually throughout much of the eighteenth century (Perry et al. 2009). In 1795, the various claims were more or less resolved. After resolution of the disputes and landownership entanglements, landowners exchanged their parcels of land for City lots further to the east, began intruding upon and then, in conjunction with the municipality, erasing a landscape feature that would have held tremendous meaning. The cemetery had been the burying ground for loved ones, mothers, sisters, children, friends, husbands, fathers, brothers, patriots and loyalists, and possibly fellow countrymen.

By the early nineteenth century the area was covered over and filled in, thus preserving the eighteenth century landscape beneath. Both the burying ground and the Collect Pond, two distinguishing landmarks that had anchored the historic New York landscape and had defined the African Burial Ground, disappeared from maps

³This refers to the 1846 construction of A. T. Stewart, the country’s first department store.

of the City as New York laid the foundation for its modern cityscape (Neville 1994:70), laying asunder the most important landscape feature of New York's colonial African population.

The land was soon subdivided and houses were constructed on lots immediately after each survey was completed. Blacks began burying their dead at the Chrystie Street cemetery on a parcel of land once part of a confiscated loyalist estate (Brown 1995:12–17; MCC II:137). In 1796, the Common Council arranged to acquire part of the “Negros Burial Ground” for laying out Chambers Street east of Broadway. By 1812 the area encompassing the African Burying Ground had developed beyond the “uninviting suburbs,” as it was once described. Fortunately, the Burial Ground survived the many ground level “improvements,” carried out on top of the rubble of earlier structures or on fill purposely brought in for construction (N.Y. County Deeds 195:405–420; Neville 1994). Some areas experienced very little disturbance, leaving the dramatic history surrounding the Burial Ground largely forgotten and the undisturbed archaeological resource to reemerge during the excavations in the early 1990s. Had the topographical implications been fully understood at the time of the discovery and excavation of the African Burial Ground archaeological site, much conflict between the public and the federal government might have been avoided.

During the two decades since its rediscovery, the African Burial Ground has again undergone its own transformation from obscure archaeological site to sacred site of contention, to historic landmark, and to national monument (Bush 2006; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Statistical Research, Inc. 2009). As a central gathering place and the primary site for interring blacks in the eighteenth century, the African Burial Ground and its surrounding area would have been well used as the majority of New York's black population came to bury and honor their dead during war time. In the modern context, people from around the globe continue to visit, pay tribute, and offer their respects to the ancestral heritage of Africa in New York.

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Chapter 10

HW: Epitaph for a Working Man

Jean Howson

H W. The letters were formed from small iron nails hammered into the lid of a wood coffin uncovered in May 1992 during archaeological excavation of the African Burial Ground. If, as we believe, these are initials, then they are as close to a name as we shall get for any of the individuals whose graves were revealed at the cemetery. The coffin's lid (Fig. 10.1) had split lengthwise during the time in which "Burial 332," as it was designated in the excavation record, lay beneath the ground in lower Manhattan, but the pattern in nails was intact enough to read.¹ Beneath the letters were numerals, reconstructed as a 3 and an 8 and interpreted as the deceased's age.

The archaeological record of the African Burial Ground grants us glimpses of individuals who cannot now be connected directly to the common forms of record keeping on which biographies are typically built: church rolls; litigation and census records; correspondence, daybooks, and household diaries; newspaper notices; property and probate documents. Genealogists and historians of early black New Yorkers under Dutch and English rule have used such records to good effect (Goodfriend 1978, 1984, 2003; Hoff 1988, 1990, 1997, 2000; Swan 1995); the remains unearthed in 1991 and 1992 offer a different pathway, fraught with special challenges, to narrating the lives of individuals.

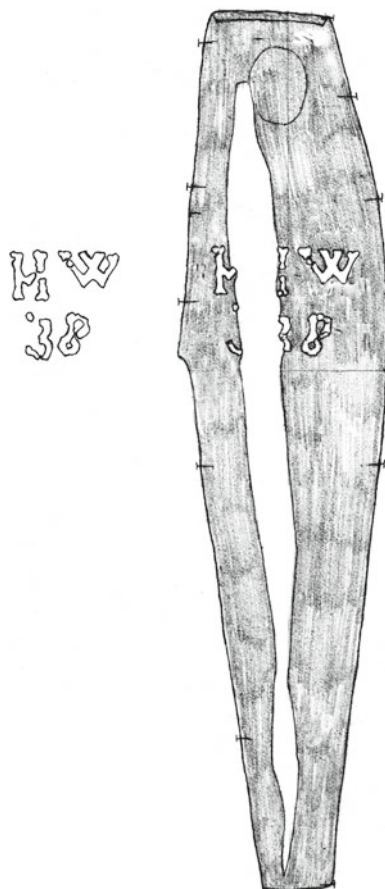
In this paper I begin with the skeletal remains unearthed in Burial 332 and offer a biographical sketch of a working man "documented" only with a pattern of nails. After describing his remains and their analysis, I use information from his bones, his grave, and the wider African experience in New York to place HW's life in context. Drawing on population statistics and data on the trade in captives and the changing face of slavery in the city, I ask when, where, and how he may have spent

¹ Excavation records kept by the field teams of Historic Conservation and Interpretation, John Milner Associates, and the Metropolitan Forensic Anthropology Team anchor the site report (Perry et al. 2009a), on which this chapter draws.

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Fig. 10.1 Field drawing showing the “Burial 332” coffin lid (Perry et al. 2009a)

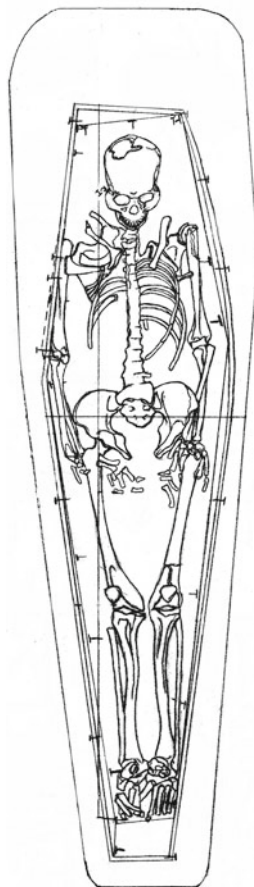


his childhood, his young adulthood, and his mature years. Finally, I return to HW’s grave, reflecting on his coffin and reconstructing the efforts of his mourners to provide him with a proper burial.

When first exposed in the field, HW’s skeletal remains held the position in which the body had been laid to rest—supine, arms extended (Fig. 10.2). The bones, however, were soft and poorly preserved.² The cranium was intact except for the right parietal bone, which had broken as the coffin and overlying soil settled over the

² Copies of field assessment forms (completed by Leslie Eisenberg of the Metropolitan Forensic Anthropology Team) were provided to the author by the Institute for Historical Biology (IHB), College of William and Mary. The IHB also provided the recordation forms completed by the osteological team at the W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropology Laboratory at Howard University, including skeletal and dental inventories; dental morphology, wear, and pathology assessments; anthropometric records; age determination scoring reports; and the assessment of non-metric skeletal indicators (see description of laboratory methods in Blakey et al. 2009b). The skeletal biology team members who worked on Burial 332 under the direction of Scientific Director Michael L. Blakey were Mark L. Mack, M. Cassandra Hill, Rachel Watkins, Keisha Hurst, Kenya Shujaa, and Allison Davis.

Fig. 10.2 Field drawing of skeletal remains (Perry et al. 2009a)



remains, and the mid facial area was crushed and eroded. Most other skeletal elements were also eroded or crushed to some degree, the extremities, ribs, clavicles, and vertebrae badly. Assessing the remains while still in the ground, the field team tentatively assigned male sex, based mainly on cranial features because the pelvic bones (which are the most sensitive indicator of sex) were so soft and damaged. The eroded bones also made age determination difficult in the field, though the erupted third molars and dental wear indicated an adult. A hardened mass on the right femur (thigh bone) suggested some type of injury that had healed during the man's lifetime, but further analysis would have to await laboratory examination.

The condition of a person's skeleton delimits the number and kind of observations that can be made, and hence the range and specificity of the individualizing details—sex, age, diet, injury, disease—that can be known about their life. A systematic assessment of the degree of preservation of each skeletal element preceded all further work on African Burial Ground remains once under the wing of the laboratory team. In HW's case, preservation scores were generally poor; measurements

were taken only where a high degree of precision was possible.³ A single precise cranial measurement could be taken, and in the axial skeleton only the diameters of the humeri (upper arm bones), right radius (forearm bone), and femurs (thigh bones) were measurable.⁴ All of HW's teeth were present except for an upper left premolar and lower right incisor, and because teeth are more durable than bone, most could be measured. No less than 63 individual measurements were taken, though enamel, roots, and alveolar regions were extremely poorly preserved, and damage prevented recording data such as crown height for some teeth.⁵

Laboratory assessment of sex had to be based on cranial morphology, the femurs, and overall robusticity (the pelvis, as noted, being inadequately preserved). A total of nine indicators differentiating males and females could be assessed, and of these five were scored as male and four as probable male.⁶ As for age, tooth eruption and epiphyseal unions were sufficient only to indicate that HW was an adult. Based on an examination of 15 cranial suture closure sites, and the fact that all teeth showed significant wear, his age could be narrowed to between 35 and 40. This assessment was made independently of the identification of a possible age ("38") on the coffin lid, and supports our interpretation of these numerals as HW's age.

As it happens, HW's age, 38, was the mean age at death for males who survived past the age of 15 in the excavated sample. The individuals who were disinterred at the African Burial Ground in 1992 included 102 males and 69 females age 15 or older, along with 157 infants and children.⁷ Twelve men and 9 women could be reliably placed in the same age group (35–40 years old) as HW. Life expectancy at birth for the African Burial Ground population, however, was only 24.2 years, so HW

³ A score of 1 indicated good preservation (>75% present); 2, fair preservation (25–75% present); 3, poor preservation (<25% present or complete but only partially observable or unobservable); and 4, missing. The average cranial preservation score for the burial was 2.65, the average postcranial score 3.02 (Mahoney and Null 2009). Most elements of HW's skeleton were too eroded or fragmentary for accurate measurement.

⁴ On the skull only the frontal chord, which is the distance from the junction of the sagittal and coronal sutures at the top of the skull (the bregma) to the point where the frontal bone meets the nasal bones (the nasion), could be measured precisely. Craniometric analyses aimed at identifying population affinities in the African Burial Ground utilized complete adult skulls with between 5 and 12 precise measurements, so HW was not among the 20–28 skulls in that sample (Jackson et al. 2009).

⁵ The detailed tooth measurements recorded for African Burial Ground individuals are essential for certain kinds of analysis. For example, though human populations have similar ranges of tooth cusp variation, some traits appear more often in particular regions and ethnic groups. Aggregate data therefore can be used to look for population affinities (Jackson et al. 2009).

⁶ Mastoid length, occipital region, mental eminence, femur circumference, and linea aspera were scored as male; the gonial region, temporal line, overall robusticity of the cranium, and overall robusticity of the postcranial skeleton were scored as probable male.

⁷ Remains of 419 individuals were recovered. The total number of adults (15 or older) identified was 244, the total number of subadults 157. One hundred and seventy-one of the adults could be assigned both age and sex, and 130 subadults could be assigned age. There were 18 individuals who could not be identified as either adult or subadult due to extremely partial, poorly preserved remains.

most definitely was a survivor. And as a man, having survived to adulthood, his life expectancy was better than for a woman: at the African Burial Ground, 45% of the men had died by age 40, compared to 62% of the women (on demography see Rankin-Hill et al. 2009).

The cause of HW's death is uncertain, but at the base of his skull there were fracture lines suggesting a possible perimortem fracture (unhealed, having occurred around the time of death). A head trauma may have caused or contributed to his death, or his body may have been injured for some reason after he died. There were 14 other adults in the African Burial Ground population with evidence of perimortem cranial fractures (Wilczak et al. 2009).

Most skeletal pathologies tell us about the quality of HW's life rather than about the manner of his death. Consider the condition of his teeth. One of HW's upper premolars and one lower right molar had caries (cavities), and another of his lower right molars had both a caries and evidence of an abscess. As noted, he had lost two of his permanent teeth, a premolar and an incisor, at some time in his life. Caries, abscesses, and tooth loss are typical among populations with high carbohydrate diets and no dental care, such as in colonial New York. Over 77% of the adults identified in the African Burial Ground suffered from caries, and most adults had lost three or four teeth (Mack et al. 2009). Eighteenth-century newspaper advertisements for "runaways" often mentioned missing front teeth as a way to help identify and apprehend an escaped captive.

Enamel hypoplasia (grooving or pitting of teeth from an interruption of enamel formation due to malnutrition and/or disease during growth) was noted on HW's lower left canine tooth. His age at the time the hypoplasia occurred was calculated at 3.42 years. While this may indicate he was weaned around age 3, causing an interruption in nutritional intake, Blakey has argued that weaning does not explain the overall distribution and chronology of hypoplasias in African American enslaved populations, and that many possible sources of stress, including infectious disease and dietary insufficiency not related to weaning, need to be taken into account (Blakey et al. 2009a).

Ample evidence of disease is in fact present on HW's bones. Periostitis lesions (from infections that give the bone surface a woven appearance) were observed on the cranium, along with cranial vault thickening; periostial striations were also present on the femurs and tibia (shin bones). Periostitis, widespread in the African Burial Ground population, is a general indicator of systemic infection. Contagious disease or bacterial infection secondary to injuries might be indicated.⁸ HW's skull also revealed possible evidence of a specific commonplace ailment: tiny areas of bone resorption on the temporals suggested to one osteologist that he had suffered middle ear infections.

⁸ Injuries were common among the enslaved, judging from the day book kept by a physician/druggist who attended to numerous "Negroes" in the city in 1743–1744. Dressings were by far the most frequent treatments recorded, with 33 entries, followed by phlebotomy and inducing vomiting, with 16 entries each (New York City physician 1743–1744).



Fig. 10.3 Close-up of skull showing porotic hyperostosis (porous bone on the cranial vault). (Courtesy of the Institute for Historical Biology, William and Mary)

HW's skull (Fig. 10.3) also exhibited porotic hyperostosis (porous bone on the cranial vault), including trace healed “cribra orbitalia” lesions (porotic hyperostosis in the eye orbits), along with moderate thickening of the diploe (expansion of the spongy bone layer between the inner and outer plates of the skull in an effort to increase red blood cell production). These bone conditions probably formed in response to chronic iron-deficiency anemia, though they have also been a result of infection (see discussion in Null et al. 2009). Chronic anemia can develop from an iron-poor diet or a diet that inhibits iron absorption, or severe illness.⁹ HW had both healed and active porotic hyperostosis, showing that he had had bouts of severe anemia and was anemic when he died.

Over half of the African Burial Ground individuals whose bones could be assessed had evidence of infection, and almost all of them, like HW, had more than one locus of infection.¹⁰ Nearly half of the individuals whose skulls could be adequately assessed showed evidence of chronic anemia. Poor nutrition renders people more susceptible to illness: like HW, almost three quarters of those with anemia also had suffered from infection. The numbers only hint at the diet and health conditions of New York's African population, because poor nutrition and disease often leave the skeleton unaffected. HW was one of the people who were sick enough for it to be registered on their bones. His tell of his own affliction, but also remind us of the living conditions and disease environment to which so many in his community succumbed.

⁹ The high mortality rate associated with genetic, sickle cell anemia precludes this as a diagnosis for HW, as eighteenth-century sufferers are unlikely to have survived to adulthood. In addition, there is a low incidence of the disease in West African and Afro-Caribbean populations, suggesting that it was also rare in African Burial Ground population (Null et al. 2009).

¹⁰ The summary of indicators of disease and nutrition in the African Burial Ground population is based on Null et al. (2009).

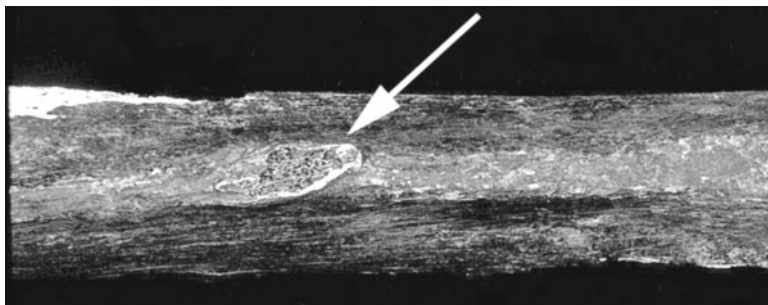


Fig. 10.4 Enthesophyte (bone spur) on the right femur. (Courtesy of the Institute for Historical Biology, William and Mary)

HW's skeletal remains also bring home the fact that slavery in New York, no less than elsewhere in the Atlantic world, was first and foremost about work. The strain of the “debilitating routines of slavery”—the one reality of enslaved people's lives that is nearly impossible to portray or narrate¹¹—is sometimes traced on bone. Markers of musculoskeletal stress (visible where muscles would have attached to bone) were found on HW's arms and legs. Enthesopathies (scarring caused by extreme stress) were recorded on the upper arm bones at attachment sites for the deltoid and latissimus dorsi (shoulder and back) muscles; pronounced gluteous maximus attachments and linea aspera (the ridges on the back of the femurs to which muscles attach) were noted for both femurs; and there was an enthesophyte (bone spur) on the right femur (Fig. 10.4). HW was typical—his stress markers were at the four skeletal locations where they were most common among men at the African Burial Ground. Years of work involving heavy lifting is a likely cause, though it is impossible to say precisely which repetitive, arduous physical activities HW's bones record (Wilczak et al. 2009).

The physical clues provide dots to connect in sketching HW's life: He underwent a difficult period around age 3, perhaps due to a drop in nutrients when he was weaned; perhaps due to a year when crops failed in an African drought or a war or slaving expedition displaced his people; perhaps due to a harsh winter in New York when food was scarce in the city and an enslaved child had to survive on whatever his mother could scrounge. He survived his youth and early teen years, when, if enslaved, he would have been put to hard physical labor. HW's bones attest to his life as a working man, but the nature of the work that built up his shoulder, back, and leg muscles remains a mystery—he might have been anything from a day laborer to a cooper. He rarely had enough healthy food, carbohydrates providing most of the calories that kept him fit for work. Despite a poor diet, he managed to keep almost all of his teeth, perhaps due to hereditary factors. He was susceptible to infections, but was able to fight them off; he may have fallen ill in one or more of those New

¹¹ The phrase was used and the point made by Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace in a panel discussion on portraying the history of slavery, Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, November 2–4, 2006.

York summers when infectious disease spread through the town, while those with the means to do so escaped to the country. At age 38, weakened by anemia, he died not of disease but of injuries—an accident or an act of violence.

When did HW live and die? The African Burial Ground was in use for at least 100 years, but it is possible to narrow the period of HW's death. His coffin, along with the location of his grave, provides the evidence. The tacks forming the initials were a type manufactured in the later eighteenth century, the first patent (for "A method of Casting and Making of Coffin Nails and Tacks...from Pig Iron...and the Tinning of same") recorded in England in 1769 (Moseley 1968:31–36; Lenik 1977). An earliest-possible date in the late 1760s is reasonable for HW's coffin. The Revolutionary War period is unlikely. Graves from the war years when the British occupied the city either held plain wood coffins or were without coffins, and HW's, unusual to begin with, would have been extraordinary during that time of privation (see Bianco et al. 2006; Perry et al. 2009c, and Chap. 9 in this volume). HW's grave was located in a part of the cemetery that was densely used throughout the eighteenth century prior to the war. The coffin and the location of the grave within the cemetery point to a plausible date of death sometime from the late 1760s to 1776, though a death between the late 1780s and 1795 cannot be ruled out.

The African population in New York City was quite large around the time HW was buried. In 1771, "blacks" (the term used in censuses) numbered 3,137—932 men, 1,085 women, 568 males under 16, and 552 females under 16 (Green and Harrington 1932; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1909). These men, women, and children represented 14.3% of the city's inhabitants. In 1746, when HW would have been in his teens, blacks had numbered 2,444, accounting for over one fifth of New York's population, their peak proportion. During the intervening 25 years, importations accounted for the rise in the number of blacks; it was very unlikely that Africans managed to achieve natural increase in colonial New York (Blakey et al. 2009c). The falling percentage of Africans reflects European immigration and natural increase, which outstripped importations of captives.¹²

The censuses also reflect changes in the demand for captives, changes that in turn have implications for HW's origins and biography. The same 1746 count that registered New York's highest-ever proportion of black residents also recorded a decrease in the proportional demand for adult men. Though in that year black men outnumbered the women (721 to 569), young girls far outnumbered the young boys (735 to 419), and men would not outnumber women again in New York's enslaved population.¹³ Young girls increasingly were in demand to work as domestics, and human cargos from Africa fed that demand.

¹² There is no doubt that the vast majority of Africans in HW's city was enslaved. The British had enacted effective disincentives to manumission in 1712 and again in 1730, laws requiring slaveholders to pay a £20 annuity and a £200 bond in order to free a captive (New York Colony 1894:1:761–767; 2:679–688). There is evidence of a free black presence in the eighteenth century, but prior to the Revolution it consists mainly of laws restricting their activities and prohibiting property ownership, as well as a court references to their participation in criminal activity such as serving or harboring other Africans. The black population recorded in the censuses thus reflects the regime of unfree labor in this northern city.

¹³ In general, low sex ratios (more adult women than men) characterized urban slavery in the Americas.

The turn to Africa marked a shift in New York's trade. Until the 1740s, transshipments from the Caribbean and Southern colonies had furnished the majority of captives to the city. Investing in direct shipments from Africa allowed New York merchants greater control over the age and sex of captives, so that they could better respond to the local market. In addition, changes in international trading contracts led to reduced prices and increased supplies of captives on the African coast beginning in the 1740s (Kruger 1985:84; Lydon 1978:387). But it was not just the need for domestic laborers and the availability of ready shipments that turned New York slavers to Africa and to ever-younger captives.

In 1741, a rumor of revolt had spread along with a rash of fires, leading to arrests of over 100 Africans and executions of 30 men by gibbeting or burning at the stake (the full account is in Horsmanden 1971; for analyses see Davis 1985; Linebaugh and Rediker 2000:174–210; Foote 2004:159–186; and Lepore 2005). New York merchants thought that the West Indian and Southern colonies had been transporting troublesome captives to the north, and they sought to curtail the practice after the events of 1741.¹⁴ Traders and slaveholders also believed that youths, especially newly captured, could be conditioned into a more docile work force than adults, even though they might lack the skills and strength of older men and women. The preference for young captives from Africa became the norm in subsequent decades. In March 1762, merchant John Watts wrote that captives for the New York market “must be young the younger the better if not quite Children, those advanced in years will never do...,” and an advertisement for the sale of “negro boys and girls from nine to twelve years of age” appeared in June of 1760 (Watts 1928:31; *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760).

How does the broader history of New York's slave trade inform us about HW's life? Though many captives were brought from Africa in the 1760s and 1770s, they probably would have been much younger than HW.¹⁵ By then, he was too old to be a prime commodity. And too, when he died he probably was not a stranger in town—not a recently arrived captive; not a sailor tasting city life between voyages; not an escapee from some rural district seeking anonymity in the bustling streets of the port.¹⁶ HW's coffin was an unusual one that suggests he had attachments in the local community, that he had lived in New York for some time.

HW would have been about 10 years old in the year of panic, 1741. If he was born in Africa, it is likely he was captured and sold to New York traders who were

¹⁴ There is evidence that seasoned insurrectionists from the islands did actually play a role in the 1741 New York conspiracy (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000:193–203). Lydon (1978:378, 387–388) compiled data showing that 70% of captives brought to New York Colony prior to 1742 were imported from American sources rather than Africa, with the ratio reversed subsequently.

¹⁵ The 1760s and 1770s saw the greatest volume of direct trade between New York and Africa. Two large shipments of captives direct from the continent, a total of 196 persons, arrived at the city docks in 1763 and at least 59 more African-born captives were recorded coming in between 1768 and 1772 (Lydon 1978:378–383).

¹⁶ On black sailors, see Bolster (1997) and Linebaugh and Rediker (2000). For examples of advertisements for Africans who escaped from holdings in New York and New Jersey counties, see Hodges and Brown (1994).

in the market for young victims in the early 1740s. Perhaps HW survived the horrors of the Middle Passage in a post-1741 shipment, arriving in a still-paranoid city, its African community still reeling from the terror of the arrests and executions.¹⁷ If so it would be impossible to pinpoint his ethnic origins. British colonial imports of humans came from five main parts of the continent: Senegambia, the Sierra Leone area, the Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, and the Niger Delta. Organized warfare, banditry, and kidnapping, whether exacerbated by or caused by the Atlantic slave trade, kept up a flow of captives from many ethnic groups to the coast. The greatest percentage of direct imports to New York came from the Senegambia, with the Gold Coast second, but in the 1740s and 1750s British shipments from the Bight of Biafra increased and may have supplied captives to New York (Medford et al. 2009a:46–49; Kruger 1985:84).

The Caribbean is a less likely place of birth for HW than Africa, since by the time he was of “marketable” age the shift to direct trade from the continent had begun. It is possible that the slaving ship that carried him may have stopped to sell captives in the islands before continuing north (Medford et al. 2009a), but HW is unlikely to have spent time living under the horrific conditions of the sugar colonies.

It is possible, of course, that HW came from neither Africa nor the Caribbean; he may have been brought to Manhattan from another part of New York or one of the other North American colonies, or he may have been born into slavery in the city. If so, he would have experienced the terror of 1741 as a young boy—would have seen, while passing the town Common near the African Burial Ground, the rotting bodies of convicted men hung in chains, or watched among the crowd while the accused were burned to death at the stake.

By the time HW took in these events, he already would have been sold away from his mother. Women were not able to keep their children with them once their labor was worth something and they could bring a price. The enslaved normally lived under the same roof as those who held them in bondage, so most holdings were kept quite small (just one, two, or three), as was typical in an urban setting.¹⁸ HW would have been put to work as soon as he could fetch and carry, moving on to more demanding tasks as he grew into adolescence and adulthood in the household of whoever held title to his person.

Whether he arrived in New York as a recent captive or was born in town, whoever purchased him may have hired him out by the day to tradesmen, builders, or ship owners. The Common Council designated the market at the foot of Wall Street as the place where enslaved men were to go to find day labor (New York City Common Council 1905:2:458); their earnings, of course, went to the slaveholders. Perhaps HW spent his days on the docks, performing the heavy and dangerous labor of loading

¹⁷ If so, it was a shipment that, like many, went unrecorded in the Naval Office accounts (Lydon 1978:382–383).

¹⁸ As Wall (2000) has pointed out, though slavery was ubiquitous in New York, it has been a challenge to find New York’s African presence in the archaeological record from domestic sites due to the shared residences.

and unloading cargo. He may have spent part of his life working seasonally on farms on the outskirts of the city. It is also possible that HW plied a specific trade. Slavery was pervasive in the city, in all branches of industry, artisanal trades, domestic labor, and transport. Advertisements for “runaway” men from New York households sought return of Andrew Saxon, a carpenter and cooper; James Richards and Harry Robbins, wagon drivers; Jasper, a silversmith, and Duke, a goldsmith; Caesar, a sailmaker; another Caesar, a glazier; Jem, a house servant; Syme, York, and Bolton, chimney sweeps; Prince and Tone, butchers; Dick, Tony, and Wan, bakers; and Prince, a ship carpenter (Hodges and Brown 1994:Nos. 17, 432, 163, 140, 552, 418, 642, 75, 342, 494, 95, 399, 57, 437, 595, 659). Men also worked as porters, joiners, ropemakers, and in tanneries and sugar refineries (see Medford et al. 2009b for a discussion of the work regimes of colonial New York). From his bones we know only that HW performed physical labor, probably for years, over at least part of his working life; few occupations in a pre-industrial city can be ruled out.

HW probably spent over a quarter-century working for someone else’s profit in colonial New York. But what can we know of his own family—did he have siblings, perhaps a wife and children? Or of his religion—were his beliefs rooted in African traditions, nurtured anew by the many newly arrived Africans in the city; or was he a Christian, a churchgoer? Or of his social network—did he mingle at unauthorized taverns, risking public whippings for being out after hours, or did he forge his strongest ties in the workplace?

We can guess that HW’s family life was fraught with difficulty, kinship a thing to achieve rather than a simple genealogical fact. It would have been a challenge to formalize, maintain, sometimes even consummate a marriage, but Africans did manage to form families.¹⁹ Those families were typically sundered by sales, bequests, or removal from town, but people kept track of each other. Some went so far as to escape to reunite with family, risking severe punishment. A 24-year-old man referred to simply as Joe fled the city just before Christmas in 1762, heading for Raritan, New Jersey, where he had relations; in August of 1750, one Phoebe escaped her Manhattan slaveholder bound for Long Island, where she was “well known”; and in mid-winter of 1778 a 13-year-old boy ran off to find his mother somewhere near the north edge of town (Hodges and Brown 1994:Nos. 217, 84, 137). Individuals were sometimes able to obtain permission to attend to family matters, such as a birth or a funeral.

Many of the churches anchoring Manhattan’s neighborhoods had small numbers of African congregants by the time HW died, and the Anglican Trinity Church in particular, having begun proselytizing among the enslaved early in the century, had many black members. Methodism arrived in New York in the late 1760s, professing anti-slavery and welcoming blacks. A handful of enslaved men and women joined at first, but by the early 1770s many were coming to hear the Methodist preachers. HW may have been among the black Christians of the city, sitting at the back of the church or in the gallery on a Sunday, unable to participate fully in church life but

¹⁹ Kruger’s massive compilation of data (1985) remains the most thorough source on family life among the enslaved in eighteenth-century New York.

finding spiritual and intellectual nourishment nonetheless—and forging bonds with sisters and brothers in worship. HW may have had other brothers, too, the men with whom he worked or socialized, and who, like co-religionists, might see to his proper burial when he died.²⁰

HW did receive a proper burial. In most ways his grave was typical, as all men, women, and children, strangers or not, received much the same treatment at the African Burial Ground.²¹ Like most, he was laid in the ground so that his head was to the west and feet to the east. There were 375 burials for which the orientation of the head could be determined, of which 367 were oriented head-to-west. Coffin burial was also typical. Of the 384 graves where presence or absence could be determined, 352 had coffins.²² HW's coffin was similar in shape to most others found. While straight-sided coffins are thought to have been used early in the eighteenth century, and later continued in use for children, by the time of HW's death the six-sided "shouldered" form was nearly universal for adults at the African Burial Ground.

Coffins with decoration, however, were exceptional. Only a handful with decorative metalwork was found among the 352 recorded coffins in the excavated portion of the cemetery. HW's was one of three that had tinned cast iron tacks, preserved in place, adorning the lids. All three belonged to adult men. The other two, known simply as Burials 101 and 176, had coffins in quite different styles. The man in Burial 101 had a coffin with a heart-shaped design on the lid, a design that has also been interpreted as a Sankofa symbol. It may have included initials, age, and date, but the tacks were displaced and corroded beyond legibility. The man in Burial 176 was laid to rest in a coffin with dozens of tinned tacks lining the edges of the lid, as well as six handles (it was the only handled coffin found). Burials 101 and 176 were not located near each other, nor were they near HW, but the interments all probably took place sometime in the 1760s or early 1770s.²³

Who made these coffins and the hundreds of others found at the African Burial Ground? A man would have needed at least the basic skill set of a joiner, carpenter, or cabinetmaker to fashion the shouldered type, not to mention adequate tools and materials (ruler, square, saw, plane, hammer; boards, and nails).²⁴ The location and orientation of nails from the majority of recorded coffins, including HW's, appear consistent

²⁰ The Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts had organized a school for enslaved Africans as early as 1704 (Butler 1983:166–169), and Trinity saw fit to establish its own "Negro Burial Ground" in 1773. Black Anglicans would emerge after the Revolution as community leaders. On churches in eighteenth-century Manhattan neighborhoods see Rothschild (1990:25–80). On the early history of Methodism in the city see Walls (1974:39–40). On social and subversive activities, men's associations, and tavern life see Linebaugh and Rediker (2000:174–210); Wilder (2001:9–35); Medford et al. (2009c:70–76); LePore (2005:150–157).

²¹ On the conformity that characterized the cemetery see Perry and Howson (2009:128).

²² Graves without coffins are believed to date to the Revolutionary War period, when wood was scarce and there were many strangers in the occupied city (Perry et al. 2009c).

²³ There were only two other adorned lids. One, that of a child, may have had a small breastplate, noted on field records but never accessioned in the laboratory; another, of a probable man, had iron tacks but if they formed a pattern it was destroyed when vandals disturbed the partially excavated grave.

²⁴ According to Rauschenberg (1990:26), after about 1760 "cabinetmaker" came to refer to men who made furniture and coffins.

with a standard construction method: A template would have been used to size and shape the top and bottom boards. Head and foot boards, the head 2 or more in. wider than the foot, were then nailed to the bottom. The two side boards were soaked, and while still damp they were kerfed (crosscut) on the inside at the shoulders, with as many as six or seven cuts sawn almost through. They were then bent around the bottom board and nailed in place, or sometimes screwed for added strength. The bottom, head, and footboards were set inside the sides, corners butt-jointed. The lid spanned the sides and when the coffin was sealed it was nailed down from the top (Howson and Bianchi 2009:222; Litten 1991:90–92; Salaman 1997:150).

In colonial New York, the household head customarily provided coffins for family and servants who died. The 1753–1756 day book of New York cabinetmaker Joshua Delaplaine attests that this extended to the enslaved in at least some cases—11 orders were placed by slaveholders for coffins for their “Negroes” (Delaplaine 1752–1756). Two additional orders were placed by the Almshouse warden for deceased black inmates. That the city paid for these as a matter of course suggests that a coffin was the *sine qua non* of adequate disposition of the dead, no matter the circumstance, in colonial Manhattan. There is no reason to assume, however, that slaveholders or wardens provided all or even most of the coffins in the African Burial Ground, and HW’s in particular, adorned with such individualizing details as initials and age, raises questions about the limits of paternalism.²⁵ For many of the enslaved, and for free blacks, it would have fallen to family and friends to see to the coffin. They would have collected the money to pay the coffin maker, or procured wood and nails and donated their skills. Africans worked for and as cabinetmakers and carpenters in New York, and the community may have relied on their abilities and access to tools and materials. It is also possible that secret burial societies predate the formal establishment in early Federal New York of African mutual aid societies.²⁶ HW may have belonged to such a society, his coffin built or procured by the collective.

The coffins made for adult Africans by Delaplaine’s shop typically cost 11 or 12 shillings, the price difference perhaps based on size.²⁷ Black paint added a shilling to the cost; screws and rosin added 1 or 2 shillings each; and an extra-large size also increased the price by a shilling. The most expensive of the “Negro” coffins listed in Delaplaine’s ledger went for 14 shillings; it was for a woman, and included screws, rosin, and paint. By contrast, one “rough coffin” built for an African man

²⁵ African Burial Ground researchers have suggested elsewhere that the custom of providing a coffin be viewed as the result of struggles over the terms of bondage rather than as a paternalistic gesture (Perry and Howson 2009:127).

²⁶ The New York African Society for Mutual Relief was not officially founded until 1808, but collective action regarding burials began 20 years earlier. A February 14, 1787/1788 petition of free and enslaved Africans to the Common Council pleaded for the city to take action to protect their community’s graves from grave robbers (New York City Common Council 1788).

²⁷ Rauschenberg (1990:34) reproduces a coffin price list from 1796 with 6-in. size increments; the cost rose 1 shilling 6 pence per 6 in. of length up to 5 ft, and was 15–18 shillings, depending upon the wood, for those 5 or more ft in length.

cost only 9 shillings. The two African children's coffins listed cost 5 shillings and 4 shillings 6 pence for one that was painted black.

These "Negroes" coffins were at the bottom of Delaplaine's pricing. Handles, breastplates or other lid decorations, fancy metalwork, linings, and special wood embellished many of the coffins furnished for deceased white New Yorkers. A child's coffin lined and "struck with name & age" brought 14 shillings; one for a man that was built of "bilsted" (sweet gum) boards with a heart, name, age, and date "struck" on the lid cost £2.2; a child's coffin covered and lined in Holland cloth and "trimmed with polisht nails" (possibly brass tacks) sold for £3.10; a man's that was covered, lined, and had a breast plate was £3.15; and a very high-end coffin for a woman was covered, fully trimmed (i.e., with metalwork known as "lace"), and lined, costing £5. Using Delaplaine's rates as a rough guide, HW's coffin—"struck" only with initials and two numerals (not a full name, not a date); unlined (no cloth fragments adhered to wood or nails); and built of ordinary wood (cedar)—might have cost about £1 if purchased to order from a cabinetmaker. But perhaps his mourners procured a plain coffin and added the lid decoration themselves.

The specificity of that decoration, whether stipulated in an order or hammered in by a friend, raises the issue of literacy among African New Yorkers. Whoever designed or fashioned the lid had command of the alphabet and numerals, and all of the mourners would have been able to view the "HW 38" during the procession to the cemetery and at the graveside—no pall would have covered it, for palls were outlawed for Africans in 1731 (New York City Common Council 1905:4:88–89). The presentation of initials and the deceased's age on a coffin acknowledges literacy, if not on the part of HW then at least on the part of some in the community who mourned him.²⁸ Literacy conferred status in the eighteenth century, especially among Africans, and it is worth wondering whether HW's coffin points to a connection with community leaders. More importantly, though, the initials and age paid homage to the man whose body lay inside the coffin by individualizing him in a way that belied the dehumanization of slavery just as it belies the anonymity of the cemetery today.

Perhaps the men talked about HW, speaking his name, recalling his life and how they came to know him as they hammered in his initials and age, while women in attendance managed to obtain a length of cloth to use for a shroud and prepared his body. The latter office typically fell to women, though practices vary among religions that may have been represented in New York's African community.²⁹ A copper-alloy straight pin adhering to a lock of hair was found under the right side of HW's skull. That pin would have fastened his shroud or perhaps a strip of cloth

²⁸ Some literate Africans would have been among those captured and brought to New York. In addition, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel continued to sponsor its "Negro school," where literacy was taught alongside Christianity, throughout the colonial period. It is likely those who were able to attend the school shared their skills with others. For a summary of the work of the SPG in New York up to 1741 see Lepore (2005:184–188). The school was offering places to 30 Africans in 1760 (*NY Mercury*, 4 August, 15 September 1760).

²⁹ In strict Islamic tradition, for example, men wash and cover men, and women wash and cover women.

holding his chin. Shrouding, like head-to-west orientation and the use of coffins, seems to have been typical at the African Burial Ground. Only 33 burials had evidence for clothing, while fully half contained pins. For graves where no pins or clothing items were present, the use of a shroud probably can be assumed, since burial cloths often were closed only with knots.³⁰ During laboratory cleaning of the thoracic (chest area) vertebrae, a tiny copper-alloy object, much like a pin fragment but curved, was found adhering to a fragment of HW's coffin wood. It was too small for a finger ring, but may have been an earring, a personal possession kept with his body when he was wrapped and placed in the coffin.

The news of HW's death would have spread quickly through the community. New York was small, after all, though densely populated, and both women and men would have had chances to pass the word during their work days, meeting at the markets and wells, on the docks, or in the streets. Perhaps a young child was sent on this saddest of errands, to tell the close kin. Those who made the coffin and prepared the body would have been joined by others who knew him for the funeral. HW's coffin would have been carried to the cemetery on the shoulders of his friends, or perhaps in a borrowed wagon if a driver was able to obtain permission to use his rig for the occasion. Funerals of "Negroes," as stipulated by a 1722 law, had to take place at or before sundown (New York City Common Council 1905:3:296). The enslaved worked all day, so those who gathered to accompany HW's mortal remains to the cemetery would have met close to dusk. The funeral procession probably would not have been large. According to another city law, passed in 1731, the master of the deceased was held responsible for "admitting" enslaved Africans to a funeral, and no more than 12 could attend (New York City Common Council 1905:4:86–87). But the gravedigger and the coffin bearers were excluded from this count, allowing for perhaps 16–18 legal attendees. Doubtless this limit was sometimes flouted, but at the risk of public whipping.³¹

HW's grave would have been dug ahead of time so as to be ready to receive his coffin. Though the names of African gravediggers or sextons are known from records of early Federal New York (Howson et al. 2009:64–65), we do not know to whom this duty fell in the colonial period. It may simply have been a friend or family member, but a designated gravedigger is also possible. The spot chosen for HW's final resting place was in what would have been the far northern part of the cemetery at the time, about 15 ft south of the fence that marked the cemetery's edge during the 1760s and early 1770s. In the archaeological excavation, many other graves surrounded his, and it is likely many of them were already in place when HW was buried. In particular, both to his north and to his south there were dense clusters of

³⁰ Poor preservation probably also accounts for burials lacking any sign of clothing or shroud. Of those burials considered to be preserved adequately enough for pins to have survived ($n=325$), 65% had pins. In the practice of shrouding, European and African traditions overlapped. The dead often were wrapped in cloth in regions of Africa from which captives were taken (Medford et al. 2009d).

³¹ The laws restricting Africans' funerals were meant to curtail large gatherings of Africans.

graves, containing adults and several children. We do not know whether HW was given a grave site here in order to fill in a gap between existing clusters, or was placed deliberately in association with one or both of them.

Of the rituals, prayers, lamentations, or songs that accompanied HW's burial we know nothing. There was no clue in his grave as to his spiritual beliefs, no religious insignia of any kind. Here the material and documentary record for New York is silent, and though funerals of the enslaved in other colonies and later periods were sometimes described, a fictional account of HW's does not seem warranted. A film created for the Interpretive Center at the African Burial Ground National Monument, however, includes a fictional funeral scene in which a man and a child are being buried. As imagined for that sequence, a woman elder leads the mourners in a loose call-and-response format. As friends and family sing, weep, pray and call out in several European and African languages, testifying to their love and respect for the deceased, the elder consigns their spirits to the ancestors.

After being filled with earth, was HW's grave marked in some fashion—with a line of cobbles, a vertical stone, or a board? Cobbles and stones marked a few graves in a small part of the excavated cemetery where the original ground surface was present. There was also one coffin with a vertical post attached to its headboard that would have extended above the ground surface. Because markers were found in the one preserved area, it seems likely they were common at the African Burial Ground. The cemetery must have been visited, graves tended by mourners long after the funeral, and subsequent burials could have been placed deliberately above or adjacent to earlier ones for as long as their specific sites were known.³²

There is reason to believe that HW's grave site was in fact revisited, and sadly, for another's funeral. A second burial ("Burial 289") lay above HW's, overlapping though offset to one side. It held the remains of a child between 5 and 9 years old. The outlines of the grave shafts recorded by the archaeologists indicate that the child was buried separately and after HW. No later graves would touch these two, so they seem to form a pair within the mapped cemetery. Was this child a relation? HW may have been an uncle (biological or not). He may have been a father.

One day it should be possible to use the DNA samples taken from each skeleton prior to reburial to test for a genetic relationship between these two individuals, and among other apparent groupings of individuals at the African Burial Ground (Jackson et al. 2009:207–211). But familial relationships among the enslaved, especially in an urban setting where separation was the norm, had to be created and nurtured beyond the merely biological—and in death as much as in life. When the child in Burial 289 was laid to rest, mourners may have looked for protection and guidance from the man who had gone before, HW.

Perhaps his name was Harry. Combing the records has failed to turn up an HW, and this is not surprising because surnames for Africans were rarely recorded prior

³² In one instance, a stone marker had been placed at the head of one of the earliest graves at the site, and this marker apparently guided the placement of two later interments alongside the early one (Perry and Howson 2009:121; Perry et al. 2009b:142).

to the 1790 census. But there were many men whose first names began with H, and Harry was the name used most often, at least by the record-keepers. Among the accused named in Horsemanden's journal of the 1741 trials were two Hanovers, three Harrys (of whom one was executed and one transported), a Dr. Harry (executed), and a Hereford (Lepore 2005:252). Advertisements for Africans who escaped from New York households included a Hannibal, a Harmon, four Harrys (one with the surname Robbins), two Hectors, a Holliday, and a Hulse (Hodges and Brown 1994:Nos. 160, 435, 505, 432, 266, 183, 86, 657). Of course, the authorities and whoever held him in bondage may have known HW by a completely different name than his friends and family.

His true and full name eludes us today, but HW's physical remains indelibly preserve some of his childhood and adult experiences. His teeth and bones tell of nutritional privation, infections, and the strains and injuries of physical labor. His coffin and grave tell us still more—of the time in which he lived, of the respect shown the dead in his community, of grieving friends, of their attention to HW's individuality as they saw him into the next life. I chose to write about HW mainly because he is the only one among those whose graves were excavated who can be referred to by something other than a mere number. But of course every man, woman, and child at the African Burial Ground had an identity, and the remains of each have a life story to reveal, in greater or lesser resolution. The contrast between the intimacy of our knowledge of their bones and the necessarily speculative nature of our reconstructed life histories is frustrating. Nonetheless, a focus on individuals within the African Burial Ground population offers a way to understand how people shaped and were shaped by the realities of the early city, including its 200 years of legal slavery.

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Chapter 11

Finding Pinkster: The Ethnoarchaeology of Dancing in the Street

Kate Tarlow Morgan

Dedicated to John Wallace, ex-merchant marine, survivor of The Texas City Mine Disaster, and cardboard box collector for 191 Front Street archaeological lab, 1979.

Block #29

Summer of 1979, I had the great fortune to be hired as documentary historian for the first major archaeological excavation conducted in New York City in the past 35 years. By August, there was a small group of us—historians, map-makers, student archeologists (shovel bums they called us), and Turner Construction Company workers, whose excavator machines were employed to lift off the twentieth century street surface and hover for imminent construction once the project was complete. Little did they know that this project was to last 3 years, and would uncover the foundation walls of an English tavern, c. 1670, called Lovelace's and, what was left of the Dutch Stadt Huys (State House) of New Amsterdam c. 1640.

Not insignificant by any means was the deft research of Ms. Regina Kellerman, architectural historian, and my godmother, who had uncovered the corner of the Stadt Huys several years earlier. We were able to pick up on her work and excavate the entire square block, Block # 29. I was 25 at the time and accepted the job for \$3 an hour. New York City, *in situ* was, and remains, my first love.

K.T. Morgan (✉)

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Figs. 11.1 and 11.2 The Fish Locker Archeology Lab, 191 Front Street, with Jay Cohen and Wendy Harris. (Photo by K.T. Morgan, 1980)

My job was to present on paper the hologramatic story of a single city block through time—by lot, by structure, by use, and length of occupation. In order to achieve this gargantuan task, I entered the great maze of city offices that housed title, deed, and map archives, including primary and secondary sources at The New-York Historical Society. This included a mild form of hazing by the Historical Society librarians, who took their work very seriously and expected you to do the same. I discovered I was a natural and became so devoted to this particular real estate history that I stayed on as lab technician with four other female archaeologists. Occasionally a male digger with a broken arm or leg would help us.

So began 3 years of washing, counting, numbering, and analyzing tons of artifacts removed from Block #29 (Fig. 11.1 and Fig. 11.2).

The Stadt Huys Lab was set up at 191 Front Street in an old fish warehouse occupying a lot on the historic Schermerhorn Row Block, that, at the time, South Street Seaport was in the process of documenting for Landmark status. The building could only be entered through an exceedingly heavy pull-up garage door that opened into an unheated space where the hoards of artifacts were stored in cardboard boxes on makeshift shelving. At the back of the building was an old fish refrigerator, 7' × 10'. That refrigerator was the lab! And, it was inside this primarily female space that the



Fig. 11.3 The Square Rigger Bar, 186 Front Street. (Photo by K.T. Morgan, 1980)

five of us worked. With electric heaters at our feet, elbows touching from one work area to the next—we made this our office and our inner sanctum. Close windowless quarters combined with the concentrated work of archaeological record-keeping created bonds of friendship fast and so we began to write on the walls with poetic sayings and historical insights. For anyone entering this workspace, there was the palpable sense of importance that we were instrumental in the piecing together of a grand puzzle, with our gram scales and our tabulation sheets...of something never before written.

Meanwhile, life surrounding 191 Front Street was alive with the flailing knives of the fish butcher next door, an empty lot across the street with Marc De Suvero's sculptures, South Street Seaport Museum expanding its purview, and The Square Rigger Bar. Fridays we would retire across the street to this bar, joined by the Fulton Fish Market workers and a few "suits" from Wall Street (Fig. 11.3).

At a dimly lit booth, over beer and pretzels, we considered field updates as to the possibility of hitting original land surface rather than landfill, and discussed the datable differences between yellow brick (made with seventeenth-century oyster shell) and red brick (datable by the baked-in initials). We also grieved the changes that were happening to the neighborhood (newer, taller buildings replacing garden lots and old warehouses) and wrote ensemble plays on the bar napkins. One play we wrote was entitled "Busman's Holiday" which seemed appropriate, as everything around us was a key to the past; and everything we touched was material culture. Even on our days off, there was history.

I did fall in love with the city. Every day using the bluestone drainage chute carved into the old sidewalk out front for dumping dirty artifact water into the



Fig. 11.4 Fulton Fish Market Entrance, Fulton and South Streets. (Photo by K.T. Morgan, 1980)

gutter. At lunch, walking a block to the East River where the last trawlers came in to unload fish out of nets—fresh to Fulton Fish Market. After work, I would visit a potter who sold his wares across Fulton Street (Fig. 11.4). It was from him that I learned the science of glazes necessary in the identification of the thousands of Dutch shards of delft and other earthenwares in our charge. The streets were still cobbled then.

While I was immersed in New York history, along with what one might call the “living topography” of Lower Manhattan, I was also witness to a “new” phenomenon in the streets called Breakdancing. Being a dancer myself, I was fascinated by the serendipity of coming across a team of dancers making their moves in public. I was also experienced enough to observe that these dancers moved with great prowess and skill. Breakers danced on disassembled cardboard boxes, enabling them to spin, whirl, dive, lunge, crawl, flip, snap, twist, whip, undulate, oscillate, slide, and freeze—without catching their skin on the rough surfaces of the New York City streets. This was before this form was co-opted into mainstream media production and before big money. During this time, Breakers passed the hat.

The first Breakdancers we were to see in the late 1970s were Latino and African-American, often divided into separate groups. This is not surprising since so much of the art of the dance enhanced the project of group-identity. “Group” not only as adolescents (for no adult athlete could meet the demands of this work)—but “group” organized to be culturally different. Breakers dancing in the street were the living demonstration of Frederick Barth’s re-conceptualizing of ethnicity (1966) where the focus was on the making of the boundaries (of difference), its maintenance, and recruitment by or through the “cultural stuff” that the boundary encloses i.e., how you look, how you dress, how you speak and, ultimately, how you move.

Innovative to say the least, I did have the sense that these dancers, in spite of their triumphant youth culture, were dancing on an old story—and that story had to do with what it meant to be IN the street. What it meant to show or act yourself—IN the street.

I became fascinated by the idea of tracing an older set of boundaries that—

1. Determined how a group of people chose to move through the streets as opposed to being allowed.
2. Created the subtle and not-so-subtle inherited display of ethnicity in the streets.

Breakers gave me this idea, but in returning to The New-York Historical Society I was able to uncover a very unique New York story about dance and identity, but one that could have only happened in the street.

During those years in the early 1980s, when I frequented the New-York Historical Society, I discovered a book that possibly every New York City archaeologist would come to covet, entitled *The Market Book*, by Thomas De Voe (1862) which included vast minutiae detailing the history, economics, and actual structure of New York City market places, from *The Market for Country Produce at Keirstedt's House* (1656–1677) through to the great enclosed markets—*Centre, Gansevoort, and Washington* of the mid-nineteenth century. The last two of which, survived long enough for my father and me to walk to on Sundays, perusing stall upon stall of food sellers, sawdust floors, giant cheese wheels, and the pervasive scent of salt water.

De Voe's research as writer and butcher at Jefferson Market in Greenwich Village provided the template for a "Pilot Study of Markets" that I researched for the New York City Landmarks Commission along with a team of archaeologists who were working towards an archaeological predictive model for Manhattan. The project was an experiment, which mapped the changing land-use patterns across seven historic time periods, beginning with the Dutch early settlement (Baugher et al. 1982: 4). The hope was that the information, readily accessible, would help archaeologists pinpoint historically sensitive areas. What caught my attention was Catherine Market, located at Catherine Slip along the East River, just east of Cherry Street, because it was there, according to De Voe, that people came to dance!

It wasn't until 25 years later that De Voe's myriad of market-facts were put to practical use—along with subsequent scholarly papers and The New-York Historical Society's prize collection of The Minutes of the Common Council—when *The East River Waterfront Access Project* required further investigation of Catherine Slip by a Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study performed by Diane Dallal and Elizabeth Meade of AKRF (2009).

This 2009 report corroborated mine of 25 years earlier that Catherine Market might have been one of the first places where African-American dancing occurred (Morgan 1982, 2011; AKRF 2007: 6). It was in butcher De Voe's book, however, that this documentary historian/dancer would come across the term "break-downs." It was clear that "breakdowns" and Breakdancing (only two centuries apart) were connected. Dances such as the "jig" or a "breakdown" are mentioned as performative activities at market. A breakdown is defined in Funk and Wagnall's (1935 edition), as a "spirited, noisy dance, usually a shuffle, as those performed by Negroes"

(Morgan 1983: 23). But Slang Dictionary defines “a break” as being the time that the performers stop to “pass the hat” (1904). And dancing for money has always been connected to the street.

Dancing in the Street/Dancing at the Market

In the eighteenth century, everybody went to market and markets were in the street. In Lower Manhattan alone, there were 12 large, outdoor markets of varying size, ranging from a few carts set up daily to permanent structures where butchers sold their meat from stalls (De Voe 1862). In a letter of 1780, Grant Thornburn notes that the Exchange Market in Broad Street was filled with “Bergen [New Jersey] squatters who were trying to dispose of their stock of crabs, clams and mussels, and all were talking together and creating a compound of jargon of High Dutch, Mohawk and African, accompanied with laughter loud and long” (De Voe 1862: 297).

The market was a place where many different groups were permitted to interact. What was “foreign” was free to come and go to market. Markets sellers,¹ functioning in the tradition of public venues, held transactions in the street. The building or shelter, itself, was *in* the street and market parameters covered roughly the length of a city block. Therefore, street activity and market activity were interconnected. The market occupied the unique position of being both inside and outside; producing easy access and easy flow that altered traditional cultural boundaries and serving the purpose of exchange of goods and valuables.

But there was more to be traded at the market. Washington Irving writes of African slaves coming to market in canoes not only loaded with cabbage, oysters, and buttermilk, but also knowledge and skills:

They are like Monks of the Dark Ages, and engross all knowledge of the place, and being infinitely more adventurous and more knowing than their masters, carry on all the foreign trade... They are great astrologers, predicting the different changes of weather almost as accurately as an almanac... In whistling, they almost boast the far-famed Orpheus’ lyre... And from their amazing skill at casting up accounts upon their fingers they are regarded with as much veneration as were the disciples of Pythagoras (Irving [1826] in Ottley and Weatherby 1967:25).

After selling their masters’ goods and produce, slaves gathered at the Catherine Street market to dance and sing (Emery 1978: 140).

The dancers brought along their boards called ‘shingles’ upon which they performed. These wooden planks were usually about five or six feet long and equally wide, and were kept in place during the dancing by four of their companions. Rarely, in their deft turning

¹The organization of the market was based on a system of benevolent paternalism not unusual to the eighteenth century, pre-capitalist, urban environment. Butchers and grocers owned their own selling areas, while the New York City Common Council played a regulatory role: checks of weights and measures; enforcing opening and closing times, prices; and controls for sanitation and spoilage.

and shying-off did they step from the board. Music was usually provided by one of their party, who would beat a rhythm with his hands on the sides of his legs (Ottley and Weatherby 1967:26).

The African-American New Yorker who danced in the streets was a popular figure. He was a comic, an eccentric, an exotic virtuoso (Morgan 1974: 3); his specialty was the Hornpipe Jiggy. In 1810, John Durang became the stereotype for the dancing “Negro Boy” that later became a stock character in Minstrelsy shows.² The black dancer was consistently admired; his skill was something that white entrepreneurs managed and invested in. Dancing was another medium for gambling, as was boxing and jockeying (Ottley and Weatherby 1967: 25). But the gamble was twofold, because slaves came to market to dance against each other as well, not unlike the more contemporary “fight dancing” that we see today in the Hip-Hop scene.

Contests evolved, along with the reputation of Manhattan city slaves being better than the country slaves of Long Island and New Jersey (Emery 1978: 141). Famous dancers such as Ned Francis, a “little wiry Negro slave”; and Bob Rawley, who called himself “Bobolink Bob”; and a man named Jack, who is referred to as “smart and faithful”—all began their dancing in the market and in the street (Morgan 1983: 25; Cohen 1983: 156).

For African-Americans in eighteenth century New York, dancing was an expression of solidarity. They assisted each other in performance, which required an inward group focus. At the same time they focused outward by circumscribing themselves in the public arena. Outsiders referred to them as a “party,” while culturally, ethnically, they were classifying themselves. We don’t have to wonder if this was true for our modern adolescent Breakers.

These dancers might have begun their careers at Catherine Market. But let us look more closely at where the market was.

Anatomy of a Market

Catherine Street Market, established in 1786, was located on the Lower East side of Manhattan, facing Cherry Street. The market house, erected at the expense of the inhabitants of the neighborhood, contained nine stalls, some leased from the city by butchers from the established Peck Slip Market. In 1797, the fishermen moved in, and by 1805 Catherine Market was the primary distributor of fish. After a new market house was erected and enlarged (1816), the number of stalls increased to 48 in number (Morgan 1982).

Remaining in business 124 years, 1786–1909, this durable market was located in what was once called the “Out Ward” (Baugher et al. 1982: appendix 6). The Maerschallck map of 1755 depicts the Out Ward abutting Montgomery Ward and

²Minstrelsy shows are a whole other realm of study that grew out of the traditions of marketplace dance and dancing in the street for money.

uncharted lands, including the Negro [African] Burial Ground above the wooden Palisades (Fig. 11.5). Next to Montgomery Ward lay the North Ward, whose western most side finished at Broadway and the King's Common, an open meadow owned by the English Government, used collectively for pasturing cattle. The King's Common faced the lands west of Broadway, granted to Trinity Episcopal Church in a patent from Queen Anne, 22 November 1705. In 1775 these lands were divided into lots and leased to individuals by the Church (Valentine 1852: appendix).

The Out, Montgomery, and North Wards were known to be areas occupied by the lower classes and industries. The vile stench from tanneries and the bilious smoke from pottery kilns were common phenomena. Once swamplands, directly above the more residential/business section of lower Manhattan, this area held two bodies of water, the Collect Pond and the Little Collect. On their shores stood the Municipal Power House and the Gallows.

In 1800, Catherine Market was still under construction (Stokes 1915–1927 (3): 1379; AKRF 2009: 4) and is depicted on the 1808 Longworth map on the filled-in portion of the slip. One can see that—

the market was directly adjacent to the open waterway, most likely to accommodate boats bringing in produce as well as fresh fish sellers who had stalls in the market as early as 1797 (Ibid.).

Later, in 1811, the market building is shown “extending from the paved portion of the slip near Cherry Street into the water of Catherine Slip” (Ibid.). With this picture in mind, we can more accurately visualize De Voe's description of the arrival of shoppers and sellers in boats—

The Negroes who visited here were principally slaves from Long Island who had leave of their masters for certain holidays, among which *Pinkster* was the principal one, when for pocket money they would gather up everything that would bring a few pence or shillings such as roots, berries, herbs, yellow or other birds, fish, clams, oysters, etc., and bring them with them in their skiff to market; then, as they usually had three days holiday, they were ever ready by their *negro-sayings and doings* to make a few shillings more (De Voe 1862: 344)

For the early nineteenth century white diarist, such activities—dancing, singing, weather forecasting, finger counting—were talents of exotic origin. These accounts were much of the time written in a condescending tone along with a blend of fascination and envy—

As a general thing, the music consisted of a sort of drum, or instrument constructed out of a box with sheepskin heads, upon which *old Charley* did most of the beating, accompanied by singing some queer African air. Charley generally led off the dance, when the sambos and philises, juvenile and antiquated, would put in the double-shuffle heel-and-toe *break-down*, in a manner that would have thrown Master Diamond and other modern cork onions somewhat in shade the (Eights [1867] in Munsell 1867:56).

On my off days from the Fish Lab at 191 Front, I spent hours at the historical society locating an increasing number of scattered texts referring to Pinkster. I wondered: who are these “sambos and philises,” these “Master Diamonds and cork onions?” And, what are they doing? Were white and black dancing *together* or were they showing off their boundaries? Then, there was a shining moment, sitting there at those wide wooden Library tables, that I came to ask myself: *WHO IS CHARLEY?*



Fig. 11.5 Plan of the City of New York (1754), published 1755. (Library of Congress)

The King of Spring: A Tale of Two Cities

Albany, New York

Charley was the Albany-based King of the Dutch springtime festival that took place on the fiftieth day after Easter, during the week of the Pentecost, culminating on Whitsunday (White Sunday) when the Holy Spirit was said to have descended upon the Apostles. The Pinkster Fest, or so it was called by city inhabitants of Dutch origin, consisted of mass celebrations lasting an entire week. We are lucky to have a detailed and lengthy retrospective of this event provided by a Mr. James Eights, naturalist and diarist of the nineteenth century.

When Mr. Eights of the Albany “Cultivator” finds himself “ushered into the densely thronged streets” of a Pinkster Fest—what does he really see? Every inch of the street, he says, is decorated with various colored ribbons and flowers.

Gathering multitudes, consisting chiefly of almost every description and feature, form and color, from the sable sons of Africa, neatly attired and scrupulously clean in all their holiday habitaments, to the half-clad and blanketed children of the forest, accompanied by their squaws, these latter being heavily burdened with all their different wares, such as baskets, moccasins, birchbark, nick-nacks, and many other things much too numerous for us even here to mention, and boys and girls of every age and condition were everywhere seen gliding *to-and-fro* amid this motley group. (Eights [1857] in Munsell 1867: 323–7)

To and Fro, has been defined by Gadamer (1975: 94) as “that which is not tied to any goal [which] accords with the meaning of the word ‘spiel’ or ‘dance’.” This idea comes very close to Richard Schechner’s (1988:97) more recent theory of play being the “regular crisis-oriented expenditure of kinetic energy” which can be transformed from play into fight energy. Pinkster, and for that matter, its street dancing, was an opportunity for “play,” but it was also an opportunity to step right up to a boundary line—one that had been drawn by a dominant group that enslaved another. Meanwhile, along cultural lines, there persisted, at Pinkster, the residual tribute to the Dutch settler in a city under English rule. Pinkster might have relieved tensions as the annual “topsy-turvey”³ drama where the King is a slave and the Dutch are back in municipal power?

On White Sunday a form of mayhem is described—

...as the excited movements increased in energy and action; rapid and furious became their motions, as the manifold stimulating potions, they from time to time imbibed, vibrated along their brains, and gave a strengthening influence to all their nerves and muscular powers; copiously flowed the perspiration, in frequent streams from brow to heel, and still the dance went on... (Ibid.).

³ “Topsy-Turvey” is a familiar term used by historians and folklorists to describe what they call “inversion festivals” that occur in cultures with strong proscriptions regarding behavior or dominance hierarchies. These festivals function as built-in societal release where those who are being dominated are allowed during festival time to be in power.

The description proceeds as the festival goes turn to “seek relief by searching for the King, amid the dingy mass...” (Ibid.). Is King Charley the boundary marker? Is he the authority figure who keeps it safe? How far could they go? How many boundaries were crossed? The “marketplace” in Eights’ essay is the Fair Grounds laid out in an “oblong square and closely hemmed in on three sides by rude buildings” (Ibid.: 324). From his viewing-point, as if the scene were mounted on stage, Eights reports on the various side-shows beyond the square exhibiting wild animals, a Mademoiselle “someone” on trapeze or rope-dancing, a Monsieur Gutta riding a horse named Selim, Rickett, the clown, and a gaming area. This is how the first day passes in a week of continuous celebration.

On the second day, before 10 a.m., the master of ceremonies arrives: Adam Blake, personal servant to “the old patron” Van Rennselaer (Ibid.). It should be noted that Adam Blake’s son, Blake Jr. became one of the richest black men in the nineteenth century (Stewart 1985). Following Adam Blake’s arrival, the “King” of the jubilee arrives. Eights sarcastically anticipates his arrival by saying that it is “vastly ungentile for the colored nobility to make their appearance on the commencing day” (Eights [1857] in Munsell 1867: 324). It is on the second day of Pinkster that King Charles is ushered in by this master of ceremonies who has been named.

According to Eights, Charles was an African prince from Angola, sold into slavery from the Guinea Gulf Coast. He is described as being “tall, thin, athletic,” in spite of his “nearly seventy winters” (Ibid.: 325). Legend has it that Charles lived until 125 years old (New York Folklore Quarterly [NYFQ] 1952 (8):31). However, if Eights is accurately depicting Charles’ age in 1807, then at the time of his death in 1824 (Ibid.), Charles would have been 97. Surely, thanks to legend, the point has been made: despite numerical discrepancies, Charles was a mythical figure of venerable age, stemming from a distant land and lines of royalty.

The King’s costume, reminiscent of a “British Brigadeer of olden time” is described as such—

Ample broad cloth scarlet coat, with wide flaps almost reaching to his heels, and gaily ornamented everywhere with broad tracings of bright golden lace; his small clothes were of yellow buckskin, fresh and new, with stockings blue, and burnished silver buckles to his well-black shoe; when we add to these the tri-colored cocked hat, trimmed all with lace of gold, and which so gracefully set upon his noble, globular pate, we nearly complete the rude sketch of the Pinkster King (Eights [1867b] in Munsell 1867: 325).

If we look closely at each piece of clothing it is clear that the only piece like a British infantryman is the *red coat*. The fact that the red coat is trimmed with gold lace and adorned “profusely with variegated ribbons” (Ibid.:56) points to the fact that the coat’s official demeanor no longer stands. The small clothes of yellow buckskin and blue stockings are not British but rather the leggings of a frontiersman—a Cooper’s “Leatherstocking” or one of the early British colonists, who fought as irregulars in the French and Indian wars (Reyes 1985). And finally, the silver buckles and well-black shoe would be the attire of a towns-man, not a soldier, a woodsman, or a slave.

King Charley's costume completes its festival parody if we make note that the Albany events occur at the top of Pinkster Hill, near the burial site of General Bradstreet's army. The image of an African-American man in the garb of the servants to the "old Monarchy," who dances on the graves of dead British soldiers, 5 years prior to the War of 1812—can only be intended as deep irony.

It is historically significant that Charles' title would be "King." It should be mentioned that Charles I succeeded the throne of his father James I, in the year 1625. It may be only coincidence that the Treaty of Southampton, forming the Dutch-Anglo alliance against Spain, was signed in that same year. The following year the Dutch purchased Manhattan Island from the chiefs of the Wappinger Confederacy for fishhooks and trinkets valued at 60 guilders (Trager 1979: 224). And finally, it was Charles the II who took New Netherland away from the Dutch after helping to restore the British Monarchy.

We may never know if the association of King Charles to the festival King by the same name was ever made, however, we know that there was the blending of African-derived musical figures and English court dance. The "eel-pot"—no doubt an earlier version of the white plastic grouting buckets that Breakers use for musical accompaniment on the street—was played by a Jackey Quackenboss—

beating lustily with his naked hands upon its loudly sounding head, successively repeating the ever wild, though euphonic cry of Hi-a-bomba, bomba, bomba in full harmony... (Eights 1867a, b, c: 326)

And -

...briskly twirled the lads and lasses over the well trampled green sward; loud and more quickly swelled the sounds of music to the ear...(Ibid.).

We are able to exercise contemporary knowledge of the evolution of dance styles by noting that ethnic and political ideologies will manifest themselves in the expressive forms of a given culture. Given that Pinkster was a multicultural event, we are to expect a blending of African and European forms. It is just as easy to identify the variables that go in to Breakdancing and, for our purposes here, to point out its derivation from countless origins be they folk, jazz, tap, modern, or ballet.

New York, New York

Pinkster events in New York City are recorded through the eyes of James Fenimore Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales" who places the festival at "The head of Broadway on the Common" (Cooper 1845 (I):65). Cooper situates a good part of his historical novel *Satanstoe* prior to the establishment of the Catherine Street Market. Written in 1845, the story depicts the lives of New York City, primarily Dutch, inhabitants living in the year 1757. His description of Pinkster festivities begins like this:

By this time, nine tenths of the blacks of the city, and of the whole country within thirty or forty miles, indeed, were collected in thousands in those fields (the Pinkster Grounds), beating banjoes, singing African songs, drinking, and worst of all, laughing in a way that seemed

to send their very hearts rattling within their ribs... The features that distinguish a Pinkster frolic from the usual scenes at fairs, and other merry-making, however, were of African origin. It is true, there are not now, nor were there then, many blacks among us of African birth; but the traditions and usages of their original country were so far preserved as to produce a marked difference between this festival, and one of European origin. Among other things, some were making music, by beating on skins drawn over the ends of hollow logs, while others were dancing to it, in a manner to show that they felt infinite delight. This, in particular, was said to be a usage of their African progenitors (Morgan 1983: 25; Cooper 1845 (I):65).

In contrast to Cooper's passage, a more pastoral, less urban scene is found in Alexander Coventry's diary⁴ entry for June 4, 1786:

It is all frolicking today with the Dutch and the Negro. This is a holy day, Whitsunday, called among the Dutch 'Pinkster,' and they have eggs boiled in all sorts of colors, and eggs cooked in every way, everybody must eat all the eggs he can. And, the frolicking is still kept up among the young folks, so that little else is done today but eat and be jolly (cited in Cohen 1983: 155).

While traveling along the Passaic River in New Jersey, William Dunlap comments on the celebrations of both whites and blacks:

It is the very holiday they call 'Pinkster' and every public house is crowded with merry-makers and wagons full of rustic beaux and belles met us at every mile. The Blacks as well as their masters were frolicking... (Ibid.).

In spite of the innocent descriptions of holy days, and Easter-like decorated eggs, in spite of all the frolicking and jolly togetherness of blacks and whites—there remains Cooper's subtle phrase, "...singing African songs, drinking, and worst of all, laughing..."—smacking of a deep uneasiness. What could possibly be unnerving about a jolly fest in the Out Ward of Manhattan?

Threatening Laughter? Threatening Dancing?

In his 1974 book *Roll Jordan Roll*, Eugene Genovese writes eloquently of the complexities involved in black slave celebrations in Southern slave society. Holidays, such as Christmas, New Year's, Easter (and after the Revolution, July Fourth) were celebrated with barbecues, all-night singing, dancing, and drinking. There was also considerable visiting from one plantation to the other as well as the attendance of whites, especially the youth. Plantation masters were also known to throw Saturday night parties for their slaves, but as organized religion increased many slaves were forced to replace those parties with the "ring-shout" in Praise Houses.

Proscription drove younger men into gambling and carousing; and it was common for illicit and impromptu partying to occur in the middle of the week (Genovese 1974:269–271).

A major characteristic of these holidays was what Genovese calls "satirical black storytelling and singing" (Ibid.:582). Satire was directed at both groups—oppressor

⁴Coventry was a Scottish physician living in Hudson, New York (Cohen 1984: 153).

and oppressed. The laughter permitted the reflexive stance needed to face the impossible situation of subordination, but also functioned as a “safety valve for pent up discontent” (Ibid.:584). Whatever was released in comic construction allowed the more dangerous anger of rebellion to lie dormant. Crisis, not celebration, was what was needed to—

...liberate[s] the anger behind the laughter. At those moments, the oppressor’s legitimacy, which laughter ironically helps to authenticate by its very playfulness, suddenly faces challenge. The slaves’ weapons of cultural defense, however, did not often contribute to a frontal assault on the regime, for the ingredients of insurrectionary confrontation rarely appeared. Their resistance to slavery remained indirect and defensive. But the slaveholders’ placid acceptance of the self-assertion implicit in the slaves’ cultural life—then awareness of its political limits and its function as a safety valve—never extended so far as to disguise completely a deep uneasiness (Ibid.).

Genovese’s thesis on satire in Southern slave society also applies to the attitudes, assumptions, and innuendoes employed in the written accounts of multi-ethnic festivities in eighteenth and early nineteenth century New York City. It should not be overlooked that New York State observed the severest code of slavery north of the Potomac (Olson 1944:147). However, in New York City, where the concentration of slaves was high, the enforcement of such tight restrictions seemed remarkably mild (Ibid.:148) otherwise, how could Pinkster have survived? Much of New York’s slave codes were concerned with “the ability of enslaved people to move at will and to gather” and yet the viability of Pinkster as an annual event stood in contrast to the fact that it was illegal in New York State for more than “three slaves to meet anywhere, anytime” (Lepore 2006:57).

Insurrection

The question still remains what was the concern of the governing class who authored these slave codes and anti-conspiracy legislation? Our literary butcher, De Voe, suggests that the “Negro sayings and doings” of the eighteenth century were not just dancing at the market, but also the forum for building a slave network that caused slaves to be—

...troublesome, as they held daily and nightly cabals, forming themselves into parties or clubs, thieving, etc. Some called themselves “Free Masons,” others “Smith Fly Boys”; and others, again, as “Long Bridge Boys.” We find their influence extends among the slaves of some parts of the country, and no doubt this came from the North River that was near John Hughson’s, the headquarters, where originated the “great negro plot of 1741”...There is no doubt but some of the country slaves, in their almost daily visits to the city, while landing so near these headquarters, became acquainted with this contemplated conspiracy...(De Voe 1862: 265)

The implicit association of gathering and exchange of information as being the “ingredients of insurrectionary confrontation,” (Genovese 1974:584) was what the slave code of colonial New York named as “illegal assembly, punishable by trial held without jury and a severe whipping” (Olson 1944:150–151). Capital crimes,

which slaves might commit, included murder, rape, and willful arson (Ibid.). It is pertaining to the last capital crime, arson, that two major events occurred in New York History—one, the Negro Insurrection of 1712 and two, the Negro “conspiracy” of 1741. It is perhaps due to these events that Cooper expresses ambivalent delight in the “African origins” of the Pinkster events.

Briefly described here from the point of view of the governing officials, the events of 1712 occurred on April 6—

Twenty-three negro slaves met at about midnight in the orchard of one Mr. Cook, in the middle of the town, for the purpose of destroying as many of the inhabitants as they could to revenge themselves for the hard usage they felt they had received from their masters. Some of them were armed with firearms, some with swords, and others with knives and hatchets. One of them, Coffee (or Cuffee), slave of one Peter Vantilburg, set fire to an out-house of his master, whereupon the whole band sallied forth and marched to the fire. News of the fire spread through the town, and a crowd of townspeople flocked to it. The band of insurgents opened fire on the crowd, killing nine citizens and wounding five or six others. Alarm was given. The Governor, by placing sentries and having the militia of New York and Westchester counties drive to the island, captured all the rebels, except six who preferred suicide to capture. In the “trial before ye Justices,” twenty-seven were condemned. Twenty-one were executed—some were burnt, others hanged, one broke on the wheel and one hung alive in ye towne.’(all paraphrased from Gov. Robt. Hunter to the Lords of Trade in Johnson 1971: 7–8).

Twenty nine years later, in March, 1741—

A number of fires followed in quick succession throughout the town. Wild rumours began to fly that the fires were the result of a slave conspiracy to destroy the city and massacre the whites. Negroes were arrested wholesale and put into prison, but no clue to the origin to the fires could be found. The mystery was deepened by the fact that none of the fires was connected with any attempt at violence. A month or so later after the burning of the fort, Mary Burton, a white indentured servant to John Hughson, an innkeeper, was called before the grand jury to testify regarding a robbery which, it was alleged, had been planned in her master’s place. The jury came to feel that in Mary Burton they had the key to the mystery of the fires. The girl at first refused to give any testimony on that point, but under pressure she told a story that involved three Negroes known as Caesar, Prince, and Coffee (or Cuffee) not only in the robbery, but also in the conspiracy to burn the town, massacre the whites, and make themselves the rulers. She testified that the three had met often at her master’s house to lay these plans. In her story she also implicated John Hughson, her master, Sara Hughson, her master’s wife, and another white woman, named Peggy Kerry, known as “the Irish Beauty,” who lived at Hughson’s and was the kept mistress of Caesar, having had a child by him. It cannot be known how trustworthy Mary Burton’s testimony was, but through it scores of persons were eventually involved in the charge. The trial was held in an atmosphere of apprehension and terror. There were, of course, many persons alive who had vivid recollections of the ‘Insurrection of 1712’ (Ibid.:8–9).

John Hughson owned a Tavern on the far West Side of Manhattan near what was called Crown Street. It was a particularly severe winter in 1741 when ten fires blazed across the city over a 3-week period. At Hughson’s Tavern, black and white New Yorkers intermingled. And, it was from this site that the Supreme Court concluded (based on Mary Burton’s questionable testimony) that the fires were the work of “plot Negroes” from the half-free community who hatched their plans on street corners and in markets.

The fact that the African population in New York City at this time was quite large also plays a part in the “evolving nature of slavery in the urban North” (Ibid.). Jean Howson, in her essay on “HW”—the initials carved on the coffin of an exhumed body from the African-American Burial Grounds in 1992—notes that in 1771 “blacks” (a term used by the censuses then) numbered 3,137, representing 14.3% of the city’s population (see Howson, Chap. 10). African slave and free-black demography reaches its peak precisely at the time that these “insurgencies” are recorded. And, while our documenters—Eights and Cooper—write to us from their respective nineteenth-century lens, it is *of* the 1750s and its context that they situate Pinkster.

In a city as racially tense as New York was in the mid-eighteenth century (Pickering 1966:18), we might see the multi-race celebrants of Pinkster as the revolutionaries combating a more subtle and pervasive increase of rules, regulations, and curfews. In the eighteenth century, the English were more eager to place restrictions regarding street-dance, dancing at the market, and the mingling of slaves with freemen. This is perhaps another good reason why people participated so feverishly in the Pinkster Festivals. For one week out of the year, they could return to the old ways—the Dutch way.

In New York, differences are recorded between how the Dutch and English interacted with the African population. An American Captain Graydon comments with disapproval at the way slaves were an “integral” part of the Dutch family and community life. He continues:

Their Blacks, when they had them, were very free and familiar; some times sauntering about among White meal time, with hat on head and freely enjoying occasionally in conversation as if they were one and all of the same household (Graydon 1846:171).

The End: How Holidays Replace Festivals

In Albany, there is no record of Pinkster happening past a formal ban cast in 1811 (Morgan 1983, 2011:141–175). Walsh (in 1896) mentions the death of King Charley in 1824, noting that the Albany celebrations began to be observed with less enthusiasm, and finally sank into a low nuisance (Ibid.). Why did Pinkster disappear? Charley may have been the rare charismatic figure needed to perpetuate the event? Or did the “freedom” the slaves had on those celebratory days become too realistic, and as a consequence, too dangerous? Consider this additional view of the Pinkster Fest also described by Walsh, “The Toto Dance,” he calls it, “Partook so large of savage license that it gradually came to be shunned by respectable whites” (Emery 1978:143).

The banning of Pinkster Festivities in Albany coincided with the emancipation of African-American slaves in New York State, who, by being freed, may have become a more viable threat in the context of annual wild and licentious celebrations. From another perspective, the Pinkster Festival’s period of license no longer served its “topsy turvey” purpose. King Charley may have died and, the celebrants freed. Now what did that mean for the streets? Again, if the scattered texts we find

referring to Pinkster Festivals in eighteenth century New York are to tell us anything more than what the general history of the times can do, it still leaves us with an ambiguous message—just as the Breakers do. Are they playing or fighting?

In his essay, “Theorie de la Fetes,” Callois (1940:105) writes,

As the social organism grows increasingly complex, so it becomes less prepared to tolerate an arrestation of the conventional course of life. Everything must go on today as it did yesterday and will tomorrow. The general overflow of emotion is no longer possible. The period of license has been individualized. Holidays have replaced festivals.

That holidays have replaced festivals is a significant historical phenomenon. But Pinkster’s devolution is unique. There may have been a more formal Pentecostal holiday that replaced Pinkster Fest after 1811, but it is not recorded. What is compelling is a reversal of Callois’ theory—that Pinkster *began* as a Holiday in the Netherlands and became a festival in New York. There was a bubble of time, probably no more than 100 years, that the Dutch Pentecostal Spring Holiday was transformed *into a deeply regional, and highly complex, multi-ethnic celebration of freedom, youth, and courtship.*

We might find the residue of this kind of intra-cultural energy in what Hip-Hop is today.

Festival behavior has been considered by a number of scholars as the time in which the rules of daily life are suspended; that festival functions are a “safety valve” used to blow off steam or used as a leveling device to ease accelerating tensions between groups (Lorini 1978:16–17; Turner 1968). In some cases, people become *more like themselves* in order to identify their difference (Barth 1966; Hodder 1982) and in other cases, they play the “other” self—the self they are not, like a King Charley. These roles of inversion are seen by anthropologists as the ways in which a group (1) wards off danger; (2) initiates others into and through the ritual process; (3) celebrates seasonal change for luck in planting or harvesting; and (4) exhibits the unacceptable as it lies safely within festival limits (Davis 1975:152–154).

All four definitions of festival inversion behavior are, in their various ways, supportive of the status quo. They can all be defined together under Bakhtin’s (1968:10) concept of “the official feast” in which the so-called unacceptable action within a special occasion serves to solidify the conventions and traditions of everyday life (Lorini 1978:22).

There are, however, situations when festival incites insurgency and “sanctions riot and political disobedience” (Davis [1975] in Babcock 1978: 154). This is the point at which “play” shifts to “protest” (Fernandez 1983:211). Bateson, too, addresses this shift as an ever-present potential in the nature of human groups. The occasion can move quite quickly from “This is Play,” to “Is this Play?” (Bateson 1972:2)

What makes Pinkster a particularly interesting festival in this respect is that it contains many characteristics upon which scholars disagree. What, in fact, was the “moral economy” (to quote Thompson 1969) of the Pinkster crowd? What “deep meaning” (to quote Geertz 1973) did celebrants derive from the events? What structural changes occurred in the journey from Dutch, religious holiday to multi-ethnic carnival? And finally, was there any “communitas” (to paraphrase Turner 1980) between groups?

This complex set of questions brings up what James Fernandez would call “the argument of images” which can be the basic ingredients of festival. In other words, what aspects of a culture are used to produce a particular occasion? What factors make it special? In Fernandez’ analysis of a festival in Northern Spain, images are arranged, complimented *and* contradicted in a highly charged parade. The tensions are created in a dynamic between those who march in the streets (the working people) and those who watch from the stands (the officials and municipal and regional governments). The paraders mock at “national” culture by displaying over-sized dolls acting out satirical situations about the conflict between local identity, regional affiliation, and national unity. In Fernandez’ own words—

What the crowd sees is what it gets from life—what life is in the end all about: a matter of being dominated or subordinated, or winning or losing, of living or dying. Since what the crowd feels it is getting from life may be incongruous with its images of itself, these images of victory or defeat, life or death, can be used, if the crowd takes itself seriously, to animate it to excited collective behavior in favor of its perceived interests and desired images (Fernandez 1983:219).

The basic incongruities of the different lives in the crowd are then expressed, through play, as (1) the ironic presentation of the Spanish self; (2) the taking up of mock arms against an imagined, military other; (3) the parody of “citizenship”; and (4) the sarcastic attitude towards Spanish/Asturian history (Ibid.:221).

Fernandez concludes that the “play of tropes” (of phrase and image) upon the existing order of things should be added to the theories of festival and misrule as the primary function of irony in human interests. Carnival is not just catharsis, or *comunitas*, or social/political change—it is also self-reflexive. Festival contains within it the ironic emergence of the individual working in an amalgam of “conviviality” (Fernandez 1983: 222–223)—out of which comes independent and serious statements about the world beyond the celebration. The function of those “negro sayings and doings” (to quote De Voe 1862) in the New York City Commons, and on top of Pinkster Hill in Albany, might have served just this purpose: conviviality masking the protest within the play as well as the release and display of arguable images.

We can simply roll time forward and draw accurate parallels between the physical linguistics of Breakdance, with its acrobatic, sexual, mechanistic moves and the seasonal revolt of an oppressed group cloaked in festival behavior. The exquisite success of Breakdance is that it first happened in the street, but the “play of tropes” twisted in such a way that its current marketability has rendered it predictable as a form, and sans message as a medium.

Permissible Constellations vs. Permeability

Out of the imagined mouth of his friend Monsieur Teste, Paul Valery (1964:23) writes, “I am seeing and being myself.” People never say “I AM”—instead, they refer to what they do and *show* who they are. Frederick Barth (1966:17) defined ethnicity as being the “permissible constellations of statuses, or social personalities

which an individual with that identity may assume..." And so, groups arrange themselves according to what they prevent each other from doing as well as what they *see* each other do. Which is why Monsieur Teste later says, "I am free, but classified" (Valery 1964:32).

The Breakers' dance takes on new meaning if we understand it in the context of King Charley. These roles that are played classify *all* of us and include us in a history in which we did not participate. Frederick Barth (1966:134) continues by saying that,

Situations of social contact between persons of different cultures [creates] a structuring of interactions, which allows the persistence of cultural difference.

Is that what Pinkster achieved?

Archaeologists Wobst (1977) and Hodder (1982) call this "boundary maintenance." In essence, the theory states that if there is a fence built between two groups, the closer one group gets to the fence the more it will do to be different. Proximity then, according to these scholars creates ethnic identity. Back in the 80s, the closer I got to the Breakers' circle, the more white, female and (at the time) 30, I became. But how close would I have gotten to King Charley?

Sifting through these novelistic and diarist's texts can only retrieve the amount of permeability between Pinkster celebrants in eighteenth century New York City and Albany. We can never know for sure. We can, however, do a bit of ethnoarchaeology on ourselves, in our own time, and ask how far can a person pass from one group to another? Can we cross-over further if we are in the street? If the answer is yes, might it be because it isn't permanent? Or is there some aspect of these transformations that take place in the street that takes hold thereby altering the criteria for behavioral and cultural difference? On the flip side, what happens if these brief moments of cross-over/ permeability increase the distance between groups? Thus making a case for the general theory that one's identity is carried on one's face.

Towards a Stratigraphy: Conclusion

Back then, in the 1980s, I would take the subway as I do now. There would be a delay at Times Square where a water main burst. We would be stuck at the station with the doors opening and closing—some would get off, some would get on, some wouldn't know what to do. So many streets and objects; so many angles and vantage points, colors, hues, filth, violence, speed, kindnesses, the unexpected. And even in the absurd stillness of an unmoving train, with its caustic engine revving up and idling down in anticipation, then, as now, I was surrounded by people and movement—faces, gestures, skin color, clothing; clean or dirty, harmless, dangerous, funny, attractive... All material for further research.

And, as if the images weren't enough, there were all the letters, the instructions: maps, signs, ads, and the graffiti. Graffiti swarmed all over the inside and the outside of the train. Names wielded marks of a challenge—FLIP, SKIP, CASA NOVA BROS., DOOMSKI, STRETCH, SKETCH RAGE, REVOLT. The overall effect



Fig. 11.6 Break Dancer at the Roxy, New York City, photo by Amy Arbus, 1983

was of determinedness for coverage, that is, how to write over every possible inch and, also, how to repeat yourself as much as possible. On one particular day back then, during a delay, my arm lay against a message. A good part of it was obliterated by somebody else's message, but what I *could* read went like this: ... "A BREAK... INDESTRUCTIBLE FORCE... ZULU..." That, for me, was a gift of the public archives that was a prediction that there would be dancing in the street again and—the birth of Hip-Hop (Fig. 11.6).

What the seventeenth-century Dutch painters and the culture of Breakdance have in common drive for public expression viz. the millennia of Prehistoric, Egyptian and Roman scratch-work, doodlings, wall paintings, and *Graffito*. There is a very small Dutch genre painting on display at the Metropolitan Museum. It is by Pieter Saenredam and depicts the inside of the Maria Church in Utrecht, 1641. In the foreground, on the right hand side, written quite legibly on the pillar of the church is graffiti! In an attempt to explain the notion behind Saenredam's graffiti writing, art historian Svetlana Alpers (1984:177) writes in her book *The Art of Describing*—

In a painting of the Mariakerk, Utrecht, the inscription is grouped with three small figures that are scrawled on the foreground pillar in the same ink or chalk. Like the figures to which it is bound, it is executed in three colors—ochre, black and white—and in three hands that divide it in such a way as to suggest a series of graffiti done over time:

Dit is de St Mariae kerck binnen uijttrecht (ochre)

Pieter Saenredam ghemaectt (black)

Ende voleijndicht den 20 januarij int jaer 1641 (white)

The permissible layering process of graffiti, in the seventeenth century or the twenty-first, acts as a model for an unprovable theory of cultural permeability,

which, during the lifespan of the Pinkster Fest, must have occurred “live” and “in the street.” During that specified week of celebration, people were released from their boundaries IN public. We know that for sure. What we don’t know was how much cultural permeability occurred and to what point this would have inspired insurgency. We can, however, live our own lives and experience what it is that draws us into the street, where we go, and who we *break* with.

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Part IV
Merchants, Craftsmen, and Working Men

Chapter 12

Merchants Craftsmen and Working Men, Historical Background

Meta F. Janowitz and Diane Dallal

New Amsterdam was founded by merchants, craftsmen, and working men in the employ of the Dutch West India Company. As the years went by and New Amsterdam became New York City these groups, now free from company or state control, remained the core of the eighteenth-century town. The population of Manhattan¹ and its trade grew at a steady pace throughout the century although the city was not as commercially or politically central to the English North American colonies as Boston and Philadelphia.

New York City came into its own in the nineteenth century. The city had been occupied by the British for almost the entire duration of the Revolutionary War and it continued to be their headquarters until their troops' final evacuation on November 25, 1783. For many years afterward, Evacuation Day was a time of public celebration for New Yorkers on a par with the 4th of July. The effects of the British occupation on the physical structure of the city and its environs were devastating. Not only had the British occupied and damaged the vacant houses of patriots who fled the city, they had also cut down orchards and woodlands for use as firewood. By the end of the war, Lower Manhattan had lost much of what remained of its original forests. Large-scale fires in 1776 and 1778 destroyed many buildings, including Trinity Church at the intersection of Wall Street and Broadway.

¹ New York City consisted solely of Manhattan until 1898 when Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island joined it to create the city we know today.

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When patriotic artisans and merchants came back to the city, they set about restoring their livelihoods (see, e.g., Wall's account of Daniel van Voorhis and his family). For a brief period (1789–1790) New York was the nation's first capital, graced, at least in the eyes of store keepers, by the presence of Congress and other government officials. The capital soon moved to Philadelphia, however, and other setbacks befell the city. The first blow was the Panic of 1792, caused by rampant speculation in bank stocks; merchants and investors of all economic means lost crippling amounts of capital and savings. At first the city's economic recovery was aided by European troubles caused by the French Revolution and subsequent French and English conflict: The United States tried to maintain an official position of neutrality and sought to increase trade with all parties. America, with New York in the lead, became an important neutral carrier of goods, a situation pleasing to neither England nor France. During the late 1790s, a "quasi-war" between the United States and France, as historians have called it, led to great losses of ships and their cargoes, many the property of New York merchants. Napoleon's rise to control of France terminated this conflict but maintenance of neutrality became ever more difficult after 1803 when France and England officially went to war. A key point of conflict for the United States, in addition to seizure of cargoes, was the impressment of sailors from American ships by the British Royal Navy. The Royal Navy claimed the men as former members, whether rightly or not. England and France passed decrees that in effect forced other countries to choose between them as trading partners. After a failed attempt at diplomacy with England, President Jefferson and Congress passed an Embargo Act of their own in December of 1807, which forbade American ships from leaving ports for foreign destinations. This misguided attempt to put pressure on the warring parties was misdirected, of course, devastating New York shipping and causing severe unemployment for all involved in trade. The Common Council tried to relieve conditions for destitute seamen and laborers by hiring them for public works projects: digging the foundation for the new City Hall, filling up the Collect Pond, and working on the city's forts, among other things (Burrows and Wallace 1999:412). Under pressure from many sides, Congress repealed the Embargo and passed a Non-Intercourse Act in March 1809, which allowed for trade with all countries except for Great Britain and France and even proposed to resume trade with whichever would agree to accept America's neutrality.

Foreign policy under President Madison was no more successful in maintaining neutrality and fostering trade. In preparation for what many saw as an inevitable but economically ruinous return to war, the city government bolstered Manhattan's fortifications. Its politicians, for the most part, voted against Congress's 1812 declaration of war with Great Britain. Many New York working men were more belligerent and welcomed the conflict, forming regiments ready to protect the city. New York financiers eventually helped the federal government obtain funds to fight the war, at terms potentially favorable to themselves, but the city as a whole suffered. The Royal Navy began by blockading the Narrows, leaving Long Island Sound as a way for shipping, including privateers, to leave Manhattan, but by the end of 1813 the blockade extended from New England down through New York. Trade was restricted to goods that came overland from New Jersey or down the

Hudson. The city, especially its laboring folk, once again lacked food and fuel. Nevertheless, craftsmen and artisans responded with enthusiasm to requests from the Committee of Defense to volunteer the labor needed to construct additional fortifications in anticipation of a British invasion from the north. The fortifications were built but the British did not invade.

War with England ended in 1815. In the opinion of Robert Greenhalgh Albion (1984:9), a maritime historian, February 11, the day news of the Treaty of Ghent reached the city, was “one of the most significant dates in the whole history of the port.” Peace had several immediate effects on New York’s commerce; perhaps the most important was British merchants’ mass shipment of goods to New York, more so than to the other port cities (Albion 1984:12). Residents acquired the British commodities they had lacked during the war and goods that could not be absorbed locally were sold to merchants in the city’s auction houses. In 1817, the New York State legislature took two actions that did much to aid New York’s commercial ascendancy. First, legislation was enacted that ensured goods sent to auctioneers would be sold rather than withdrawn if prices were low, thereby continuing the flow of British goods into the city. Secondly, the building of the Erie Canal between Albany and Buffalo was authorized.

The Erie Canal was New York’s single greatest weapon in the struggle to dominate American commerce. First proposed in 1811 it was, as Burrows and Wallace (1999:419) say, “a dream of pharaonic proportions.” The federal government under Madison refused to grant funds for its construction but De Witt Clinton and his colleagues found funding within the state. By creating a navigable waterway between Manhattan on the Atlantic and Buffalo on an entrance to the Great Lakes, its backers guaranteed that the lion’s share of the trade between the coast and the rapidly developing interior would pass through the port of New York. The entire waterway was opened in 1825, to the accompaniment of public celebrations after Governor Clinton and other dignitaries completed the trip from Buffalo to New York City along the Canal and the Hudson.

Public celebrations in New York City between the Revolution and the Civil War included parades and public feasting (see Pipes, Chap. 16). Artisans and workmen assembled in ordered cohorts to parade in serried ranks up and down Broadway, into and out of the Battery at the tip of the island, and to City Hall. The workers of Manhattan did not know it in 1825, but the Canal was to contribute to a period of increased manufacturing activity in the city. By the middle of the century, one of every fifteen people engaged in manufacturing in the United States worked in Manhattan, most not in large-scale steam-powered factories, which tended to be located on the outskirts of the city in Brooklyn, Staten Island, and New Jersey, but in small workshops dependent on human effort and skill (Burrows and Wallace 1999:661–662).

The organization of labor and relationships between workers and their employers were transformed after the Revolution. Eighteenth-century goods were manufactured in a craft setting, with masters taking on apprentices who advanced to journeymen and, in time with skill and luck, to masters themselves. Apprentices and journeymen lived with their employers (see Harris and Wall, Chaps. 17 and 13). Independent

laborers were generally hired by the day, cartmen (see Cheek, Chap. 15) were hired by the job. This system of employment changed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for a variety of reasons, some technological, some political, and some social.

The technological reason was the Industrial Revolution—the advent of steam power and machines. Political reasons centered on the republican ideals of the Revolution. Each man was held to be the equal of every other. Even though this was manifestly not true, it was still the ideal situation in the minds of many citizens of the United States. Social reasons were numerous and interconnected. Unemployment caused by the events leading up to and during the War of 1812 exacerbated tensions between journeymen and masters. The journeymen accused masters of employing apprentices and foreigners, thus reducing the work available to journeymen, while masters “struggled to get ahead at the expense of their employees” as competition between producers increased (Burrows and Wallace 1999:443). The end result was the commodification of labor, turning artisans from craftsmen into wage laborers. Workers no longer lived with their employers but instead rented rooms in boarding houses. Separation between place of work and place of residence became the norm for New Yorkers during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The separation of the home and the workplace had many roots: changes in the organization of labor, crowding in Lower Manhattan as the city grew rapidly, epidemics that scoured the city in hot weather, the establishment of public transportation in the form of horse-drawn omnibuses, and new cultural ideals of the proper roles for men and women. Manhattan’s population mushroomed from approximately 33,000 in 1794 to over 95,000 in 1814. In 1815, Belfast, Ireland merchants began a regular passenger trade between that city and New York, Liverpool merchants did the same 5 years later. Between 1820 and 1832 the number of immigrants entering the port of New York rose from 3,800 to 30,000; by 1837 60,000—almost 75% of all Europeans entering the United States—came through the city (Burrows and Wallace 1999:433–434). New York’s population was approximately 124,000 in 1820, 166,000 in 1825, 197,000 in 1830, and over 270,000 in 1835. By 1845, over a third of its 371,000 inhabitants were foreign born, increasing to 47% of its 813,700 residents in 1860. During the eighteenth century, most immigrants to New York were from various parts of England, Scotland, and Wales. This changed in the nineteenth century, first with large numbers of Germans, followed by the Irish, especially after the potato blight caused famine conditions in that country in the 1840s and 1850s, and continuing later in the century with crowds of Southern and Eastern Europeans.

The separation of men’s and women’s daily lives, the Domestic Revolution, meant that female occupations were confined, preferably, to the home duties of housekeeping and child rearing. Even when women engaged in manufacturing activities, it was likely to be in the form of outwork, where women did piece work in their homes (Burrows and Wallace 1999:443). For middle class women who did not need extra income for their families, their job was the efficient running of a moral, peaceful home where children learned to be pious and honorable citizens of the republic and where servants, often young immigrant women, learned American virtues.

Men ventured into the outside world to conduct business or engage in manufacturing or trade.

The physical aspect of the city also changed. In 1811 the Streets Commission presented a plan for the development of Manhattan. Streets were to be laid out in a neat grid plan, without regard to natural topography or to some uptown settlements, so as to “unite regularity and order with the Public convenience and benefit, and in particular to promote the health of the city” (cited in Burrows and Wallace 1999:420). It made each block regular so that land too became an easily defined and exchanged commodity. With the adoption of the plan, Manhattan’s uptown expansion acquired a predetermined character.

The city fathers had been trying for some time to find a way to get more clean water to quench the thirst of its inhabitants and their businesses and to prevent large-scale fires. In 1835 action was finally taken by the city government to create a viable plan to bring water from the Croton River into Manhattan, but the city had delayed too long. The Great Fire of December 16th of that year raged through Lower Manhattan, causing somewhere between 18 and 26 million dollars worth of damage to businesses (see Dallal, Chap. 19). Fanned by strong winds and with firemen unable to take water from frozen wells and cisterns, (even the East River was frozen in the frigid weather) it burned almost unchecked for 2 days and nights and was only prevented from spreading uptown when buildings along Wall Street were blown up to create a firebreak. The glow of the blaze was seen as far away as Philadelphia.

The city’s merchants were prosperous enough in the 1830s to be able to quickly rebuild after the fire, erecting commercial structures in the Greek Revival style, in accordance with national ideals linking America to the first democracy. Rebuilding also intensified the conversion of the city below Wall Street into an almost exclusively financial district, as it would remain until the very late twentieth century.

This brief summary has not mentioned many important pre-Civil War events, in particular the effects of huge numbers of immigrants on the city’s workforce, the religious lives of New Yorkers (see Meade and White, Chap. 18), the creation of slums—especially the Five Points district near City Hall—and the political machinations that lead to control of the city by Tammany Hall. The following references and those of the individual chapters in this section will guide the reader to these subjects.

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Chapter 13

The Van Voorhis Family: Artisans in Post-Colonial New York City

Diana diZerega Wall

Introduction

One of the great strengths of historical archaeology is that it allows us to use a powerful magnifying lens to explore how large-scale, global processes (such as the penetration of the capitalist world system) impacted on people at the local level in different cultural contexts in different parts of the world at different times. Here, I use that lens to explore how Daniel van Voorhis, a silversmith of Dutch extraction, and his family made their way in New York City in the decades following the American Revolutionary War as the settler colony was transformed into a post-colonial nation-state.

Archaeologists Bert Herbert and Terry Klein discovered the Van Voorhis assemblage on an old basement floor when they led the archaeological excavations at the Barclays Bank site on Wall Street in lower Manhattan in 1984 (Louis Berger and Associates 1987). They inferred from the presence of both domestic artifacts and small ceramic crucibles, used for melting precious metals, that the artifacts had originated in the home and shop of a silversmith. I later discovered from looking at newspaper advertisements (Gottesman 1954) that the assemblage had probably been left by the Van Voorhis family, silversmiths who had lived on the property where the assemblage was found from 1784 until around 1787 (Wall 1987:363) (Fig. 13.1).

Post-Revolutionary New York City

New York City was unique among the British-American colonial cities in that it was the only city that the British army occupied throughout the Revolutionary War. Then, it served as a haven for Loyalist refugees from all over the colonies and after

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Fig. 13.1 Crucibles from the site of the Van Voorhis workshop. (Courtesy of the New York State Museum, Albany, NY)

their evacuation at the end of 1783 (which included the departure of about 5000 black loyalists; see LaRoche, this volume), the city was in shambles. Its population had shrunk by half, to around 12,000; it had suffered through two major fires; its wharves and warehouses were collapsing; its ships and its overseas market links with Britain and the British West Indies were gone. The city's economy and its infrastructure had to be rebuilt completely. (Burrows and Wallace 1999:265, 270)

But the Revolution's success, in effecting the transformation of the colonies from colonial to independent status, also removed all of Britain's mercantile restrictions and opened up innumerable possibilities for the economic expansion of trade and manufacture. At the beginning of the Revolution, seaboard cities like New York "stood poised between tradition and modernity; and the Revolution ... greatly accelerate[d] the transition between older and more modern forms of economic and political life" (Foner 1976:68). Although it got off to a somewhat shaky start in the years immediately after the war, by 1797 the city had jumped to first place in terms of port activity among the new American cities. And its population swelled, first to 33,000 in 1790 and then to 60,000 in 1800—an almost one hundred per cent increase (Rosenwaike 1972). New York, with its access to a vast hinterland, was developing into a core economic area within the capitalist world system (Wallerstein 1980). Its new *laissez-faire* ideology promoted the view that the self-interested pursuit of gain, free of regulations for the common good and the tenets of the "moral economy" (Thompson 1971), provided the greatest benefits for society. As part of this transformation, the old artisan system of production began to break down and manufacturing in the city was gradually reborn as metropolitan industrialization (Wilentz 1984).

Although much has been written about this change, here I explore it from a slightly different perspective: I look closely at the Van Voorhis family and examine some of the strategies they used in adapting to life in the volatile post-colonial city. For them and their contemporaries, the decades after the war must have been times of deep uncertainty. Its inhabitants did not know that this particular republican experiment would succeed, that New York would become a world capital, and that the new country would become (for better or worse) the world's hegemonic power at the turn of the twenty-first century.

These outcomes became evident only with hindsight. I follow the family as they negotiate their way through that uncertain time in the new city. Although I cannot directly hear their voices and therefore cannot literally speak for them, I have gleaned information from both archival documents and the artifacts found on their basement floor and I use this information to make inferences to try to understand their lives. As I think we will see, there seem to have been ambiguities in the choices that they made that seem to express ambivalences about who they were and what their place was in this age of unprecedented transition in the newly post-colonial city—ambivalences about their identity. As I think most of us would agree, “identity” is a dynamic, contested, multilayered phenomenon, that is neither bounded nor homogeneous (Jones 1999:220–221). We can see how the Van Voorhis family mobilized different, and often conflicting, identities during the first two decades after the war. In some ways, they acted like colonials, while in others, they acted like citizens of the new republic. Van Voorhis himself was in some ways a Knickerbocker New Yorker—a “Dutch-descended, and above all, authentic native of New York City” (Bradley 2008:331)—but at the same time he and his family were also “Americans”—citizens of a republic that transcended New York. And in some ways, they were traditional craftsmen of the ancient regime, but in others, they were entrepreneurs in the new capitalist marketplace.

The Van Voorhis Family

The first Van Voorhis to come to the New World was the family of Steven Coerte van Voorhees, which emigrated from the province of Drenthe in the Netherlands to the Dutch colony of New Netherland in 1660. There, Van Voorhees, his wife Willempie Roelofse Seubering, and their six children settled in western Long Island, where their descendants continued to live for generations. Daniel van Voorhis was born there in 1751 in Oyster Bay, which was then almost a day’s ride from New York City. He was baptized in a Dutch Reformed Church in Wolver Hollow, a church where Dutch continued to be spoken and records kept in Dutch well into the nineteenth century (Christoph 2000; Wicks 2007). In 1775, on the eve of the Revolution when he was 24, he married Catherine Richards in the town of Brooklyn (which at that time was not part of New York City). Unfortunately, as is often the case in studying women, it has proved difficult to find out much about Catherine Richards’ background before her marriage, beyond the inference that she had been raised in the Anglican Church—one of her grandfathers was a sexton at Trinity Church, an Anglican stronghold in New York City (Christoph 2000; New York County 1784, 37:257). We do not know if they were married in the Anglican or in the Dutch Reformed Church. But we do know that they were patriots; they spent the first part of the war in Philadelphia and then moved to Princeton, New Jersey. Van Voorhis, in fact, fought in the Battle of Princeton in 1777 (Waters 2000, II:419) and was silversmith to the Continental Congress (Wall 1994).



Fig. 13.2 *Plan of the City of New York, 1789* by John McComb, showing the location of the Van Voorhis home and workshop. (Library of Congress)

In 1784, just after the war, when Van Voorhis was in his early 30s and Richards was in her late twenties, the couple and their three young children arrived in New York. There, they opened a gold, silver, and jewelry shop on Hanover Square, in what before the war had been (and what they probably hoped would be again) the wealthy East Ward in lower Manhattan. Silversmiths tended to locate their shops in richer neighborhoods, so as to be close to their customers (Fales 1973:195). Like most artisan families of their time, they lived at the shop with their children, journeymen, and apprentices (Fig. 13.2).

Colonials and New Republicans

One of the transitions in identity that the Van Voorhis family and their contemporaries faced was that from colonial American to citizen of the new republic. We can see this ambiguity when we look at the styles of the material culture that they used in their household. For decades after the war, the classical style was popular in architecture and the decorative arts in the new nation. In the post-revolutionary United States, it was known as the Federal style because it was closely associated with the Federalist administrations of George Washington and John Adams. Inspired by innovations introduced in England just before the war, it exhibited a simplicity and restraint that seemed tailor-made for the culture of the new republic (Burrows and Wallace 1999:344). The Van Voorhises used objects in this style in several of

Fig. 13.3 Plates in the royal pattern from the site of the Van Voorhis home and workshop. (Courtesy of the New York State Museum, Albany, NY)



the arenas in their lives. It characterized most of the silver pieces that they made in their shop and it also typified many of the dishes that they used in their home. Catherine van Voorhis chose plates in what the English potters called the royal pattern to serve the family's meals—and although we might see it as an oxymoron, the ceramic style referred to as “royal” in England exhibited the characteristics of the style that was called “Federal” in the republican United States. But not all of the Van Voorhis dishes were in this style. Catherine van Voorhis also served tea, perhaps to the shop's wealthy customers, in romantic Chinese export porcelain teacups, a style that had been popular in the colonial period too (Wall 1994). Perhaps in using these cups the family was underlining their deference to their rich customers—a deference that no longer had a place in much of republican life (Figs. 13.3 and 13.4).

But although Catherine van Voorhis used the Federal style, symbolic of the new republic, for serving meals to the members of her household, she must have been aware of the irony involved in doing so. Daniel van Voorhis, as a white male artisan who had fought in the war, had probably been politicized by his experience, and had become a demanding member of the electorate that candidates running for office had to placate in order to win; for the most part the deference of the colonial era was gone (Burrows and Wallace 1999). But Americans avoided the full implications of their revolutionary radicalism in the post-colonial era when it came to European-American women and all African Americans. Although women had made an enormous contribution to the war effort, they were not granted political rights or considered full citizens of the new republic, and as time went on they became more and more excluded from the political process. In fact, the very idea of their acceptance as political equals was greeted with hostility or ridicule (Kerber 1990:279). This must have been particularly galling for Dutch-American women, who had

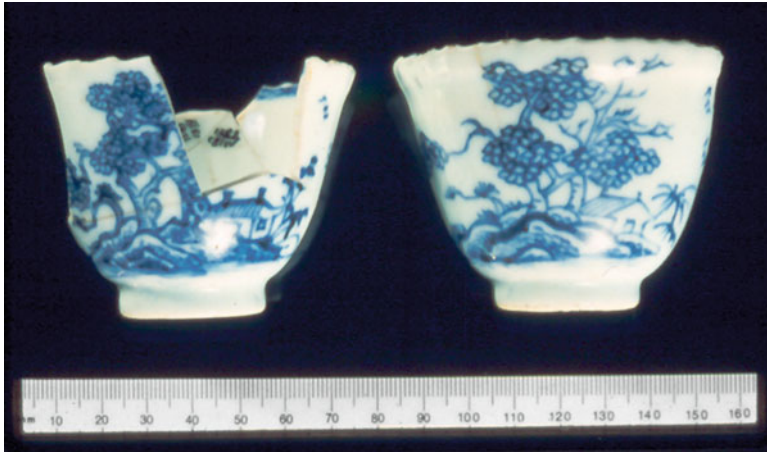


Fig. 13.4 Chinese export porcelain teacups from the site of the VanVoorhis home and workshop. (Artifacts courtesy of the New York State Museum, Albany, NY)

enjoyed legal and customary rights that their Anglo-American sisters lacked. After the Revolution, access to the political arena for white women was available only through the notion of republican motherhood, the tenet that women's sole political role was to bear and raise sons who would prove to be good citizens for the republic. As time went by, a new philosophy grew up around this role: since an enormous amount of time, energy, and money went into raising sons ("the citizens of tomorrow") and daughters (who would be "the mothers of those citizens"), families began to have many fewer children than they had had in the colonial era. Catherine van Voorhis apparently did not don the role of the republican mother, perhaps because she came of age before the Revolution. She had a total of nine children, three girls and six boys (Christoph 2000:437).

Although many enslaved African Americans earned their freedom by fighting for one side or the other during the Revolutionary War, in New York State the promise of freedom for all African Americans was denied. Compared to most of the other northern states in the republic, emancipation came late to New York, in 1827, and Dutch Americans in the rural southern part of the state—including the area where Van Voorhis grew up—were among its most ardent supporters (White 1991:18–19). In 1790, New York City's population included over 2000 enslaved African Americans (Hodges 1999:163), and one out of every five of the city's households included at least one enslaved African (White 1991:5). As we might expect, most of the enslaved (around 45%) lived in the homes of the city's rich commercial families, but a full quarter of the city's enslaved population worked in the homes of the city's artisans (White 1991:7). Catherine Richards did own one slave, at least temporarily. In 1784, the year the family returned to the city, her aunt Charity Wheeler died and left her niece a "negro wench named Bassy" (New York County 1784, 37:257). But Bassy apparently did not continue to live with the family for long; by 1790, neither she nor any other enslaved African was listed as a Van Voorhis household member (U.S. Government, Bureau of the Census 1790).

Knickerbocker New Yorker or American of the New Republic?

Daniel van Voorhis also showed ambiguity about his status as a Knickerbocker New Yorker as opposed to a citizen of the new republic. When archaeologists Diane Dallal and Paul Reckner were researching clay tobacco pipes that had been discovered in archaeological contexts at sites in New York City, they came across a number of examples that were decorated with Masonic symbols. After the Revolutionary War, Masonic symbols and patriotic, republican symbols became so closely intertwined that Masonic symbols could be considered a second national style, one “that went far beyond the use of the fraternity of Freemasonry” (Franco, quoted in Dallal and Reckner 1995). Many of the “founding fathers,” including Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, were members of the order. The researchers discovered a tobacco pipe with Masonic symbols in the assemblage associated with the Van Voorhis home and shop. The Van Voorhis household was a large one, so I cannot say whether or not this particular pipe belonged to Daniel van Voorhis himself, one of his workmen, or a guest. But we do know that Van Voorhis was a Mason. The researchers came across his name among the records of the Grand Masonic Lodge in the State of New York.

The archaeologists discovered that the Masons apparently were important to Van Voorhis for more than their republican associations. He was one of the founding members of a new lodge, called the Holland Lodge, which was formed in 1787. In fact, he was one of the signers of the petition submitted to the Grand Lodge requesting permission to form the new lodge.

The petition stated that the signers needed to be able to perform “their Labours in the Low Dutch Language” because they were “not well acquainted with the English Language.” Van Voorhis himself, as a Dutch American who grew up in the sixth and seventh decades of the eighteenth century on western Long Island and who was baptized in a church where Dutch was spoken, probably spoke Dutch as a child (White 1991:189), but his fellow members of the Holland Lodge were by no means all of Dutch extraction. They included, for example, the German-born John Jacob Astor, who made his fortune in the fur trade and multiplied it in Manhattan’s real estate. Van Voorhis and his fellow lodge members may have chosen to affirm (or don) identities as Dutch New Yorkers (either real or imagined) in order to reinforce their status and enhance their positions in the unstable world of the newly post-colonial city.

The Holland Lodge was one of several early ethnically based fraternal organizations which not only provided support for their members but also countered the new origin narrative that was being constructed for the nation as a whole. The new narrative focused on the English settlers in New England and erased from popular historical memory the presence of not only the Dutch, but of Native Americans and Africans, just as it would later ignore the fact that the Spanish and the French were among the earliest Europeans to settle in the area that later became the United States (Frijhoff 2000). The Holland Lodge may well have been an early expression of the construction of a competing Knickerbocker narrative for the origin of the city, a narrative that would grow in the nineteenth century after the 1809 publication of

Fig. 13.5 A delft tile from the site of the Van Voorhis home and workshop. (Courtesy of the New York State Museum, Albany, NY)



Washington Irving's (2008) *History of New York as told by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (see, for example, Bradley 2008, 2009; Fabend 1991; Frijhoff 2000; Kenney 1975:235–254). Ironically, there is no record that the Holland Lodge (which still exists today) ever actually kept its minutes in Dutch. Van Voorhis was active in the lodge for only a few years; he is last mentioned in its records in 1793.

We can see another possible expression of Dutch identity among the Van Voorhises in the style of the house that the family lived in at 27 Hanover Square. This house had been built in the late 1690s, presumably in the Dutch tradition with stepped gables facing the street. The archaeological record tells us that many of the houses' interior details were also Dutch in style: the fireplace and the baseboards were at least partially lined with delft tiles; there were green and orange-colored floor tiles on at least some of the floors; and terra cotta pantiles covered the roof (Wall 1994) (Fig. 13.5).

The fact that the house was Dutch in style may have had meaning to Daniel van Voorhis, but other factors probably also contributed to the family's decision to lease it, including its rent, size, and location. But the family did not identify wholly with its Dutch roots. As mentioned above, Catherine van Voorhis had apparently been raised as an Anglican and all five of the Van Voorhis children who were born in New York City were baptized at Trinity Church (Trinity Church 1959:113, 1960:103). This church was the city's Anglican stronghold and continued to be the religion of choice of the establishment in the new republic.

Mastercraftsman or Entrepreneur?

Just as the Van Voorhis family seems to have been somewhat ambivalent about their identities as colonial subjects as opposed to new republicans and as Knickerbocker New Yorkers as opposed to Americans, they also showed ambiguity

about their place in the social relations of production in the post-colonial city. In the small shops of the colonial period, mastercraftsmen (helped by their journeymen, apprentices, and slaves) produced goods to order. And although the early mastercraftsman was in fact a capitalist, in the sense that he owned the tools of production, he was first an artisan and master of his craft (Marx 1976, I:1029): he taught the apprentices and worked alongside the journeymen. But with the growth of the market after the Revolutionary War, the trades were under pressure to expand. By the middle of the nineteenth century, while a few masters still worked as traditional craftsmen under the artisan system, most worked either as entrepreneurs completely divorced from the productive process or as foremen-supervisors in control of work that was performed either in garret shops or at home as part of the out-work system. But this transformation of the trades was often a piecemeal process, as the Van Voorhis shop shows.

In some ways Van Voorhis operated like a mastercraftsman in a traditionally organized shop, but in other ways he acted like a modern entrepreneur. He operated like a traditional mastercraftsman in that he took in apprentices and journeymen, many of whom boarded with the family. This practice resulted in the strikingly large households typical of the earlier colonial era. In 1790 (the first year of the United States federal census; U.S. Government, Bureau of the Census), there were 16 people living in the Van Voorhis household, and only half of them could have been members of the immediate family. Nonfamily members included five men and one boy who probably worked as journeymen and apprentices in the business. This pattern persisted throughout the next decade: in 1800 (the next year for which we have such information), the household had grown to 18 people, 10 of whom were family members and eight of whom were young men between the ages of 16 and 25, all presumably apprentices and journeymen (U.S. Government, Bureau of the Census 1800). But by the late 1790s, not all of his workers were journeymen and apprentices. In 1799, Benjamin Wood made spoons for the Van Voorhis shop as a day laborer (Waters 2000:48)—a position informed by capitalistic social relations.

Life in traditionally organized artisan shops was very integrated, with homes and workplaces located in the same building. The master not only supervised the work process, but was also responsible for the well-being of all the members of his household—family members, free workers, and slaves alike. But by the mid-nineteenth century, this living arrangement was rare. Masters had separated their homes from their workplaces, often leaving their shops downtown and moving their homes into newly forming middle-class neighborhoods. Workers (both the now-emancipated blacks as well as whites) no longer lived in their shops with their bosses. Instead, they were becoming members of a new working class, and lived in new working-class neighborhoods. Throughout the 1780s and early 1790s—for most of the time they were in business—the Van Voorhis family continued to live at their shop. But for a few years around the turn of the century, in the 1790s and early 1800s, the family lived away from the shop in the modern manner, often in a cheaper neighborhood. However, they apparently continued to provide accommodation for their employees even when they did not live at the shop. In 1800, the census year mentioned above when there were eight nonfamily members, presumably journeymen

and apprentices, living in their home, the family had their shop on Maiden Lane but lived on Liberty Street (Longworth 1800).

As in most traditionally organized shops, kin networks played an important role in the Van Voorhis shop (Waters 2000:44). Several of Van Voorhis's apprentices and journeymen were relatives, and some of them later became partners in his business. In 1784, the year Van Voorhis opened his shop on Hanover Square, he took his third cousin Garret Schank as an apprentice (Laidlaw 1986). Later, Schanck became, first, his journeyman and, in 1791, his partner. And Van Voorhis's oldest son, John Richards van Voorhis (who presumably also worked in the shop when he was growing up), became his father's partner in the late 1790s. In addition, Van Voorhis transformed one of his partners, William Coley, who apparently was not a relative, into a family member by appointing him godfather of two of his sons (Wall 1994). But not all of his partners were relatives. In the 1780s, he had a couple of short-term partnerships with people who apparently were not kin (Gottesman 1954). And, unfortunately, not all of his business dealings with family members were idyllic. His partnership with his cousin Garret Schanck lasted for only two years and later ended in arbitration, with Van Voorhis being ordered to pay almost 200 pounds to Schank's estate (Waters 2000:423). Perhaps calling on ties of family in what were becoming capitalist business relationships was dissonant with the new ideology of the post-colonial city.

Like business in the traditionally organized silversmith shops of the colonial period, the business of the Van Voorhis shop was quite diversified. The shop made large silver pieces to order (many of which survive in museum collections today). Van Voorhis's customers included such notable figures as John Jay and Henry Remsen. But there was not enough of a market for silversmiths to make a living by simply making large pieces to order and keeping smaller pieces in stock. Van Voorhis, like many of his contemporaries, imported plated goods, hardware, and jewelry from England.

He also bought some pieces wholesale from local merchants. For example, the day book of John J. Staples & Son, a hardware and jewelry store in the city, shows that Van Voorhis and Schanck were among the silversmiths who bought supplies and merchandise, such as ready-made jewelry and other sundries, there for resale. Many of these silversmiths paid for their goods with finished silver pieces (Laidlaw 1986:16; Waters 2000:46). Van Voorhis also sold jewelry and sundry items to casual walk-in shoppers. Martha Washington was a customer in 1789, when she was in New York for her husband's presidential inauguration. She bought lockets there as well as other things (Waters 2000:420). And a decade later, Elizabeth Bleecker, a local merchant's daughter, visited the shop several times; she mentions in her diary that she bought a fan for a friend at "Mr. Van Voorhis's" (Wall 1994). The shop also performed more mundane tasks, such as replacing heavily worn faux gems with new ones. The archaeological assemblage included badly scratched glass gemstones that Van Voorhis had probably replaced as well as a green glass rod that might have been used as a source of glass for making new stones (Wall 1994; O. Jones 1989).

And Van Voorhis diversified his business in other ways as well. He worked with one of the new mints that were established after the Revolution, before the

federal government began to make coins for the new nation as a whole. The partnership of Van Voorhis and Coley became diemakers for minting copper coins for the state of Vermont (Waters 2000:420). In 1787, Coley moved to Vermont and later in that year, Van Voorhis became a copartner in a joint stock company for coining coppers.

Van Voorhis was also a wholesale supplier—his advertisements mention that “Country Shopkeepers that buy to sell again may depend upon being supplied with any articles . . . on the lowest terms” (Gottesman 1954). And he and Garret Schanck also supplied some goods to a ship captain, William Howel, to take to India and China, presumably to sell there. The goods included 12 dozen conch-shell coat buttons, 12 dozen vest buttons, shoe buckles, knee buckles, rosettes, girdle clasps, and girdle buckles (Laidlaw 1986:16)

But although he definitely acted like an old-school mastercraftsman, Van Voorhis also acted like an entrepreneur. He made some of the economies of scale in the production of his work that were necessary to hold a place in the growing market. He cut the bodies for some of his pieces out of prefabricated sheet silver, instead of by hammering out the metal in the traditional way. And he also sent some pieces out for finishing—turner James Ruthven, for example, applied beaded trim to a Van Voorhis silver piece (Waters 2000:46).

The Dénouement

We would expect that a silversmith like Daniel van Voorhis would ultimately have succeeded in the post-colonial city. For one thing, the size of his potential market blossomed: the number of New York merchants (members of the elite whose families he could count among his potential customers) grew from fewer than 300 in 1790 to over 1,100 in 1800, a fourfold increase when the population as a whole did not quite double (Burrows and Wallace 1999:337). But although Van Voorhis’s strategies worked in the early years after the war, he later began to have setbacks; apparently he felt the pressures of adapting to life in the new entrepreneurial city. In the early 1790s, he and his cousin and then partner Garret Schanck joined the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. This organization had been formed after the war to provide mutual aid to its artisan members and to pressure the government to promote artisan interests, particularly by levying duties on imported goods (General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen n.d.). But this did not seem to work for Van Voorhis—he was only active in the Society for a few months (General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen 1792). And as mentioned above, his partnership with Schanck ended in arbitration. Furthermore, in 1798, when he was in partnership with his son John Richards, they had trouble collecting debts and were forced into assignment (Waters 2000:420). Although Van Voorhis reopened the shop on his own a year later, he remained in business for just a few more years.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, when he was in his early 50s, Van Voorhis began to make plans to leave the silversmith trade. He petitioned the city’s

Common Council to become a weighmaster at the Customs House in 1801, and was finally appointed in 1803 (Wall 1994). We can only surmise why he made this decision. Perhaps it was because the silversmithing trade was changing radically, with the introduction of techniques of mass production and the reorganization of the shop: many of the artisans who had formerly sold their own work were now beginning to work as jobbers, supplying finished pieces to retailers to sell (Waters 2000:48). Perhaps Van Voorhis could not raise the capital to become a retailer, or perhaps after his years as an independent craftsman, he simply did not want to—and he probably would not have wanted to see his position degraded into that of a jobber. He was not alone in leaving the trade: in 1806, only 2 of the 27 silversmiths who had been listed as working in the city two decades earlier were still active craftsmen (Waters 2000:47).

Van Voorhis continued as weighmaster until 1818, when he became a dealer in cast iron ware. But soon thereafter, he and his wife moved to Brooklyn, which was then a separate city and not part of New York. There, he returned to the silver and goldsmith trade for a few years before his death in 1824. Perhaps the market economy had not penetrated so deeply into what was then a relatively small city, because Van Voorhis was apparently able to carry on his trade there. He even practiced a sideline that had been traditional among colonial goldsmiths and which had also been pursued by his famous New England colleague, the patriot Paul Revere: he made gold teeth (Spooner 1823, 1824).

When he moved to Brooklyn, Van Voorhis seems to have become even more removed from his identity as a Dutch American. Perhaps he was put off by the derogatory comments about Dutch New Yorkers that began to appear in guide books and travelers' accounts of New York in the 1790s (White 1991:19; Bradley 2009) and by the ridicule of Dutch Americans expressed in Irving's *History of New York* (Stott 2008; Bradley 2009). By the time of his death, Van Voorhis had not only become an Anglican like his wife; he had served as a sexton at Brooklyn's Episcopal St. Ann's Church (Frost 1917, II:53).

This micro-ethnography of Daniel van Voorhis and his family shows how one household strategized and adapted to life in the quickly-changing city of New York after the Revolutionary War. They exercised identities as both colonials and republicans, and Knickerbocker New Yorkers and Americans, and they practiced their trade in some ways like traditional mastercraftsmen but in others like modern entrepreneurs. By using both material culture and historical sources, we can see how such an enormous change as the transition from colonial to post-colonial status affected life on the ground for the people who were there. Today, we look back and see this change as a "great transformation" (e.g., Polanyi 1944) with an obvious outcome, but in fact its direction was not clear to the people who lived through it. They did what we all do: they acted and reacted in a multitude of ways that seemed best to them within the context of their times.

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Chapter 14

John Zuricher, Stone Cutter, and His Imprint on the Religious Landscape of Colonial New York

Sherene Baugher and Richard F. Veit

Here were tombstones of the rudest sculpture on which were inscribed, in Dutch, the names and virtues of many of the first settlers with their portraitures curiously carved in similitude of cherubs (Washington Irving 1873:430).

It was 1768. John Zuricher had just finished installing a gravestone in Trinity Cemetery at the corner of Broadway and Wall Street in Manhattan. He looked at the stone for Catherine Bardin age ten (Fig. 14.1a). Nearby he saw the headstone he had carved for little Thomas Charley, aged two, who died in 1760 (Fig. 14.1b). He had carved a number of stones for graves in Trinity Cemetery but it was always sad to carve a stone for a young child. He thought on his own career and how quickly it had passed, more than two decades of carving gravestones for the citizens of New York. He had carved what seemed like hundreds of headstones, and footstones, as well as a few large flat tombstones, not to mention untold numbers of building blocks, hearth stones, steps, road markers, and even, on occasion, a plaque to grace the facade of a church. His stones marked the graves of women and men, children and adults, farmers, merchants, soldiers, and surgeons. The epitaph he had cut so many times still rang true: “Life How Short, Eternity How Long” (Wasserman 1972:Plate 89).

He had a large client base that extended far beyond the colonial city of New York in lower Manhattan. His customers lived in small communities in Brooklyn, Staten Island, Eastern Long Island, northern and central New Jersey, in the Hudson River Valley, and even in Charleston, South Carolina (Mould and Loewe 2006:226–227). But in 1768 he never would have guessed that his once thriving business might fall victim to the American Revolution. It had been a surprise when the Continental

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Fig. 14.1 (a) The grave of Catherine Bardin in 1768 at age 10 (Photo: Richard Veit). She is buried in Trinity Cemetery. (b) Thomas Charley's gravemarker in Trinity Cemetery was carved in the style of John Zuricher (Photo: Richard Veit). Charley died in 1760 and was only two years old

Soldiers took his window leads to cast musket balls (Office of the State Comptroller 1904:67). But that surprise was nothing compared to when the British drove the pro-patriot Americans from New York and occupied the city. He fled north to live with relatives in Orange (now Rockland) County.

The preceding narrative is based on the scattered documents and the rich material record left behind by John Zuricher, colonial New York City's most prolific gravestone carver. John Zuricher went by several names. His first name appears in the documents as Hans, Hannis, Johannis, and John, while his last name was written Zuricher, Zuricker, Zuriger, and Zuericher. His date of birth is unknown and his ethnicity is also a puzzle. The name Zuricher means someone from Zurich, the city in Switzerland, yet he was associated with both the Dutch and German communities in New York. Our first written reference to him dates from 1748 when he and his wife Elizabeth Ensler were listed as the parents of their daughter Annatje in the baptismal records of the Dutch Reformed Church of New York (New York Genealogical and Biographical Society 1902:140). The earliest gravemarker in his style dates from 1696, but is presumed to be backdated (Welch 1983:44).

Patricia Bonomi (1971:24–25) notes that in the colonial period in New York in addition to the Dutch and English there were also waves of immigrants from France, the German Palatine area, Scotland, Ireland, Sweden, Portugal (primarily Spanish Jews who fled first to Portugal), and enslaved people from Africa. New York was a religiously tolerant colony, except for anti-Catholic laws (1700–1784) that banned Catholic priests from entering the colony and prohibited the building of Catholic Churches (Shelley 1995:191). In the mid-eighteenth century, the time period that Zuricher was actively working as a stone carver, numerous churches and synagogues dotted the multi-ethnic religious landscape of the city. In addition to the Church of England, with Trinity Church and its various chapels such as St. Paul's, New York had churches and associated cemeteries for Methodists, Moravians, Quakers, Presbyterians, French Protestants (Huguenots), Dutch Protestants (Dutch Reformed), and German Lutherans (Stokes 1909).¹ In addition, Portuguese Jews who had been in the city since 1654 were finally given legal permission to construct a synagogue and in 1729 they built Shearith-Israel (Joselit 1995:1064).

One constant problem most congregations faced was having enough trained clergy. Germans from the Palatine area often joined Dutch Reformed churches when there were not enough Lutheran ministers to serve in the New York churches (Howard 2001:168). Zuricher appears to have been active in both the Dutch and German communities. He witnessed several baptisms in the Dutch Reformed Church of New York between 1748 and 1750 (New York Genealogical and Biographical Society 1902). In 1764, a Hans Zuricher was listed as an elder of the German Reformed Church in New York (Hastings 1905:104). These colonial churches were places where non-English languages were spoken openly. Perhaps Zuricher's written knowledge of Dutch came from his affiliation with the Dutch Reformed Church. From his carving we know that he could read and write in Dutch, English, and Latin (Welch 2007:9). Zuricher's strong affiliation with the Dutch community can be seen in his numerous gravestones inscribed in the Dutch language. One of his earlier stones was cut for Altje Brinckerhoff (d. 1749) of

¹The first Catholic Church, St. Peter's Church, was established in 1786, after the Revolutionary War and the end of British colonialism in New York (Shelley 1995:191). Therefore, it is beyond the scope of this chapter.



Fig. 14.2 Zuricher carved this gravestone for Altje Brinckerhoff, Fishkill Dutch Reformed Burial Ground, New York (Photo: Richard Veit). The inscription reads: “Here lies the body of Altje Brinckerhoff wife of Abraham Adrianse who died in the year 1749 she was 21 years, 17 months and 6 days old”

Fishkill, New York (Fig. 14.2). Over the course of his career he carved markers for Dutch and English families including the elite families buried in New York’s Trinity Cemetery.

Although we do not know how many of Zuricher’s clients were affiliated with Manhattan congregations, his extant stones in the greater metropolitan area indicate that he served clients throughout the region. His stones appear in Dutch Reformed Cemeteries (Flatlands and Flatbush both in Brooklyn), Baptist cemeteries (Old Baptist Church Burial Grounds, Nassau County, NY, Scotch Plains Baptist, Union County, NJ), Presbyterian cemeteries (Bedford Presbyterian Churchyard and Southold Presbyterian Churchyard, Suffolk County, NY, Old Tennent Cemetery, Monmouth County, NJ), and numerous Anglican cemeteries including Trinity (Fig. 14.3a) and St. Paul’s (Fig. 14.3b) both in Manhattan, St. Andrew’s on Staten Island, and St. Peter’s in Perth Amboy, NJ.

In the colonial period, craftsmen learned their trade by serving an apprenticeship with a master craftsman. We do not know who trained Zuricher. Some later carvers, such as John Frazee, who left an informative autobiography, claimed to have taught themselves (Frazee 1835). Could Zuricher have done this too? Perhaps. The cherubs on his later markers sometimes resemble those carved by Uzal Ward of Newark, and in one case, a stone carved by Ward for Gilbert Forbus (d. 1769), who was buried in Trinity Cemetery, was lettered or re-lettered by Zuricher (Zielenski 2004:Appendix Z:119). It appears that the original inscription field was



Fig. 14.3 (a) Trinity Church and graveyard, Manhattan (Photo: Carl Forster). (b) St. Paul's Church and graveyard, Manhattan (Photo: Richard Veit)

cut down so that a new epitaph could be carved on the stone (Personal communication, John Zielenski, August 17, 2009).

Zuricher and Ward both seem to have begun carving in the 1740s, the former in New York and the latter in Newark. Ebenezer Price, probably New Jersey's most prolific carver, whose work is also found in Manhattan, Staten Island, and on Long Island, also seems to have started carving in the 1740s, though again a handful of stones by his hand bear earlier dates.

Based on the gravestones in Trinity Churchyard it appears that before Zuricher, Ward, and Price began carving, the Metropolitan region received some of its markers

from New England. Others gravemarkers were carved by anonymous local artisans. Three of these unknown craftsmen have received modern designations: the Old Elizabethtown Soul Carvers I and II (Veit and Nonestied 2008:43–44) and the Common Jersey Carver (Zielenski 2004:102–109).

The Common Jersey Carver, who was active from approximately 1730 until 1760 and whose work is found from the eastern tip of Long Island through New York City, west into central New Jersey, and as far north as Kingston in the Hudson Valley, certainly influenced, and may have trained Ward (Zielenski 2004:103) and perhaps Zuricher or Price. Whatever their relationship, Zuricher certainly was familiar with his contemporaries' work.

Zuricher likely purchased his stone from the rich sandstone quarries of northern New Jersey (McKee 1973:13). Writing in 1868 George Cook noted "The red sandstone in the vicinity of Newark has been used as a building stone since the settlement of the country" (Cook 1868:507). During the mid-eighteenth century some of the richest quarries were owned by Samuel Meadlis and later by the carver Uzal Ward (Zielenski 2004:3(1) Appendix W10). New York City lacked easily worked stone, making the city and its artisans dependent upon stone brought in from New Jersey or New England, and perhaps even imported from overseas.

In New York City, Zuricher was able to purchase lots on the Hudson River and establish his shop (Mellett 1991:44). The exact date of the purchase of the lots is unknown but the two New York City lots "bounded by the Hudson River" are bequeathed to his six children in Zuricher's 1781 will (Fernow 1967:487). The stone was probably barged across the river from New Jersey, and unloaded near his shop at his own dock. His business grew. His workmanship was well known and he was reputed to have to cut the cornices and arches for renovations to the second City Hall² (1700–1811) in Manhattan and even the milestones for the Albany Post Road (Mellett 1991:46; Williams 1989). Building stone and hearths still made up much of his business, but he clearly was quite busy carving gravestones.

He married Elisabeth Enslar or Enslar (Welch 1987:28) and together they had 11 children (Mellett 1991:44). Zuricher's (1781) will lists those who survived him: Lodiwick, Magdalen, Elizabeth, Hannah, Nancy, and Marrito (Fernow 1967:487). The records of the Dutch Reformed Church of New York, also list a son Johannes baptized in 1749 (New York Genealogical and Biographical Society 1902:150); however, he fails to appear in later records and may have died young. However, there is no record that their other children were baptized in New York City's Dutch Reformed Church, and where they were baptized is unknown. Zuricher and Enslar also served as witnesses at the baptisms of several children in the Dutch Reformed Church.

In 1775, the war for independence began with the battles at Lexington and Concord. The next summer a massive British fleet carrying some 32,000 British soldiers and sailors arrived by sea in New York harbor and landed on Staten

²In 1802, construction began on the current City Hall, long after Zuricher's death (Betts 1995:231).

Island (Papas 2007:77). In August 1776, the British Army defeated Washington's army in the Battle of Brooklyn Heights (Countryman 2001:234). Zuricher, like many patriot craftsmen, watched helplessly as the British took over his beloved New York. On September 11, 1776, Admiral Lord Richard Howe met with patriot representatives Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge at a peace conference held at the Billopp Mansion (the Conference House) on Staten Island (Davis 1926:47). Unfortunately, the conference was unsuccessful. The British took over control of New York City. Citizens who were loyal to the American cause fled the city, including Zuricher and his family. During the British take-over, a fire consumed much of the city. Some blamed the retreating revolutionaries although this remained an unproven accusation (Countryman 2001:234). The city's population dropped dramatically from approximately 25,000 people to about 5,000 residents after the exodus of the patriots (Edwards 1917:16).³ For Zuricher and other New York City patriots and their families, the war meant abandoning their homes and businesses and starting over in another community.

Zuricher fled north to a small town called Tappan (on the west side of the Hudson River on the border between New York and New Jersey), and lived with his son Lodiwick, a farmer (Budke 1975:138). His wife is not mentioned in his will and it seems likely she predeceased him. To Zuricher it may have seemed as though the good old days would never return. He may have thought that it was time to lay down his mallet and chisel. His old clients were dispersed; the city he loved was a shell of its former self with one-third of the buildings burned. Uzal Ward of Newark, his old colleague and competitor may have supplied Zuricher's carving business with New Jersey brownstones but that connection was soon severed as Ward decided to cast his lot with the Crown. In 1777, Uzal Ward fled to New York City, leaving his wife and children in Newark, New Jersey; Ward served the British as a pilot and a guide throughout the war (Zielenski 2004: Section 3, Part 1, Appendix W, p. 15). During the war years Zuricher continued to carve stones, but in fewer numbers. In 1781, Hans Zuericher of Haverstraw Precinct in Orange County New York, described as a stone cutter, wrote his will. The war ended with the British evacuation of New York City in 1783 but Zuricher died the following year on May 29th, 1784. He left a few personal effects and his "lots in N.Y. City" (Fernow 1967:487). Jacob and Abraham Brouwer of New York, both hatters, witnessed his will (Fernow 1967:487). Unfortunately, no one has ever found a gravestone for the master carver himself.

Compared to the rather thin documentary trail that John Zuricher left, his material record is incredibly rich, comprising several dozen gravestones produced during a career that spanned four decades. Those gravestones survive as artifacts to tell a story not only about Zuricher the man and his career but also about life in colonial New York.

Zuricher's work first attracted scholarly notice for its aesthetic qualities in the 1970s when Emily Wasserman (1972) and Francis Duval and Ivan Rigby (1978)

³Between 1778 and 1779 numerous Tories sought protection in British-held New York City, and the population reached almost 33,000 (Still 1956:37).

began documenting gravestones as folk art and photographed some of Zuricher's markers. Daniel and Jessie Lee Farber (2003) also photographed Zuricher's stones in the 1970s and 1980s. Much of the early and mid-twentieth century research on gravestones focused on the stones either as folk art or for their literary style and epitaphs. With the pioneering work of James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefsen (1967) archaeologists became more interested in the potential for gravestone research. Deetz (1977) described gravestones as above ground artifacts that can be analyzed for their iconographic and textual information. Archaeologists now analyze gravestones for evidence of patterns of ethnicity, class, consumer behavior, ideology, and trade networks. The first archaeologist to study Zuricher's stones was Gaynell Stone Levine in 1978 in her study of colonial trade networks. Levine studied gravestones in six colonial cemeteries on eastern Long Island in order to track colonial trade patterns (since Long Island had no stones for carving they imported their gravestones). Levine (1978:52) found that while most of the stones were from carvers in New England a few stones came from New York City and New Jersey. Of the 29 stones from known New York/New Jersey carvers, 19 (65%) of the stones were made by Zuricher (Levine 1978:52). Other researchers, including the authors of this article and their collaborators (Baugher et al. 1984; Baugher and Winter 1983; Veit 1991; Veit and Nonestied 2008), and Richard Welch (1983), experts on Long Island's gravemarkers, and art historian John Zielenski (2004) have noted and to some degree cataloged Zuricher's work. Sadly, Zuricher did not leave behind his account books, as the Stevens family of Rhode Island did, nor does his name appear in wills, inventories, and probate records as is often the case for New England stone cutters. He also neglected to sign many of the markers he carved. Today, Zuricher's work is known through his signed stones and epigraphic and iconographic comparisons of his signed works to unsigned pieces. His name appears in a handful of contemporary documents. From these we can put together a rough outline of the life of a highly talented artisan/craftsman in colonial New York.

Zuricher was certainly the most prolific carver in colonial New York City. He participated in a school of sandstone carving identified with colonial New York and New Jersey. These carvers worked with tight-grained sandstone, ranging from dark brown through reddish brown to buff in color, quarried in northern New Jersey, particularly in the vicinity of Belleville, Newark, and New Providence. Fortunately for archaeologists, the brownstone and slate markers used in the colonial period have survived acid rain and pollution far better than the marble tombstones so popular in the nineteenth century but now barely legible. Zuricher brownstones, especially the stones in Manhattan's Trinity Cemetery, have remained intact and have survived.

The Richard Churcher marker in Trinity Cemetery is New York City's oldest surviving gravemarker. The marker does not appear to be carved from local stone and is not carved in a style found in New England. Some scholars believe it may have been imported from England (Duval and Rigby 1978:4). Three churches have been on this site at Broadway and Wall Street: the first one destroyed in the fire of 1776; the second one (1790–1839) demolished due to structural problems; and the third one a well-known New York City Landmark (Barr 1995:1201). The Churcher marker predates them all.

The great fire of 1776 destroyed not only the original Trinity Church but also as much as one-third of the city including many of the city's other churches (Cannon 1995:409; Deak 2000:34). Many of these churches were not rebuilt in the old part of the city. As the city expanded and grew in the nineteenth century most churches were located north of the colonial city. Some of the cemeteries associated with the eighteenth century churches were relocated uptown but, even then, not all the bodies were removed (Sloane 1991:24). Some burial grounds were abandoned and new structures were erected on top of the cemeteries either destroying the graves or unintentionally preserving the bodies. Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village is built over a Potter's Field and bodies remain buried in the popular park (Kuhn 1995:1243; Sloane 1991:7). In the late twentieth century, construction projects uncovered human remains, as in the case of the African Burial Ground (see articles in this volume). In other cases, scattered bones were left from a relocated cemetery, such as the human remains found at the John Street Methodist Church in lower Manhattan (Baugher 2009). Trinity Cemetery at Broadway and Wall Street and St. Paul's cemetery at Broadway and Vesey Street have survived as the only remnants of this colonial burial landscape. Here, in these burial grounds, and outside Manhattan in the greater metropolitan region, we find the remnants of John Zuricher's work.

From a close examination of New England gravemarkers, James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefsen suggested that over the course of the eighteenth century colonial gravestone iconography underwent an evolution from mortality images (death's heads, crossbones, hourglasses, etc.), to cherubs, which correlated with the Great Awakening, a liberalization of Puritan theology. Later, at the end of the eighteenth century, new designs, symbolizing mourning, particularly the urn and willow tree, became more common (Deetz 1977:69–71). The early mortality images do correspond with historians' understanding of the Puritan mindset. In the words of David Stannard (1977: 77), "It was the unquestioned duty of every right-thinking Puritan to keep the thought of death ever on his mind." In this context, mortality images on early gravemarkers may be seen as literal sermons in stone. Deetz (1977:71) links the appearance of cherubs on gravemarkers with the rise of revivalist ministers such as Jonathan Edwards who "preached a different approach to religion in which the individual was personally involved with the supernatural".

Deetz' interpretations, while eloquent, sparked reactions from historians and archaeologists. Historians have noted that the Great Awakening was a series of religious revivals that ranged from conservative to liberal ideas and lacked a uniform message (Howard 2001:171). Jonathan Edwards actually preached a return to the Calvinist teaching of the early 1600s (Hall 1977; Miller 1971). George Whitefield (Methodist) did preach liberal ideas regarding individual choice (Rogers 1984). In New York City the aftermath of the Great Awakening left the city with more pronounced religious differences and religious rivalries (Howard 2001:171).

Archaeologists tested the applicability of Deetz and Dethlefsen's hypothesis, which linked gravestone iconography to changes in Puritan ideology (Baugher and Winter 1983; Crowell 1983; Stone 1987; Veit 1991; Mytum 2009). They found that mortality images and cherubs in New England and some other Puritan settled areas,

such as parts of northern New Jersey, may correlate with the religious changes noted by Deetz and Dethlefsen (Veit 1991), but other areas settled by Puritans actually lacked these designs (Crowell 1983). More importantly, they discovered that the iconographic evolution first noted in Puritan cemeteries in Massachusetts could be found on stones of many diverse religious groups, especially in the New York Metropolitan area (Baugher and Winter 1983, Veit and Nonestied 2008). Even more interestingly, the gravemarkers of religious groups unaffected by the Great Awakening such as Newport, Rhode Island's Jewish Community (Gradwohl 2007:38–40) and Catholics in northern Ireland (Mytum 2009) also show both mortality images and cherubs! The cherub on Jewish stones indicates it clearly was not simply a symbol of the liberalization of Puritan theology or in fact any changes in Christian theology but was a more wide-spread cultural symbol. Death's heads and cherubs, both mortality images, coming out of European traditions clearly had much broader cultural meanings.

But what of John Zuricher's work? So far as we know he carved only one mortality image, the gravestone for Barbara van Dyck (d. 1743) and John van Voorhis (d. 1757) in Fishkill, New York (Fig. 14.4a). The couple was likely married, as many Dutch women used their maiden names. It is decorated with two rather crude skulls shown in profile view. Although the lettering is clearly his, some scholars believe the mortality images may have been carved by a different hand (Personal communication, John Zielenski August 17, 2009). The vast majority of Zuricher's gravemarkers are decorated with cherubs. Zuricher was not the only carver producing stones for both English and Dutch clients. Thomas Brown of New York City produced pencil-sketch style cherubs with English or Dutch inscriptions (Welch 1983:52) and there are Dutch language markers by Ebenezer Price and Connecticut stone carvers in Fishkill's Dutch Reformed Churchyard. In fact, there are nearly identical pencil-sketch style cherubs, carved by Thomas Brown, on English language stones in Anglican Trinity Cemetery (Fig. 14.4b) and on Dutch language stones in Gravesend, a Dutch Reformed cemetery in Brooklyn (Baugher and Winter 1983).

As a member of the Dutch community and a congregant of a Dutch Reformed Church, Zuricher may have been influenced by a schism within the Dutch Reformed community that paralleled the Great Awakening. During the mid-eighteenth century Dutch churches split into two factions known as the *Coetus* and the *Conferentie* (Wertenbaker 1938:96; Balmer 1989). The *Coetus* was an assembly of Dutch Reformed ministers in America. Increasingly, members of this group argued for more local control and greater piety in religious practice. This matter came to a head in 1754 when the *Coetus* proposed that their ability to ordain ministers, something that had only infrequently occurred before, be made regular (Bruggink and Baker 2004:51). In reaction, a second more conservative group called the *Conferentie* developed. They argued for continued subordination to Amsterdam in all ecclesiastical matters (Bruggink and Baker 2004:52) While evangelical ministers such as Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen of New Brunswick and Samuel Verbruyck of Tappan were leaders in the *Coetus*; Johannes Ritzema, minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York, Zuricher's church, was a staunch supporter of the *Conferentie* (Frusciano 2006). Zuricher was actively carving during much of this



Fig. 14.4 (a) Zurich stone for John Van Voorhis and Barbara Van Dyck (1757/1743), Fishkill Dutch Reformed Burial Ground, New York (Photo: Richard Veit). Note the rather crude mortality images. (b) This cherub with the inscription in English is from a gravestone in Trinity cemetery in Manhattan (Photo: Richard Veit). The same styled cherub is found on a stone in Dutch in Gravesend Cemetery in Brooklyn. The carver may have been Thomas Brown of New York City

controversy, though how it affected him and if it affected the way he ornamented his markers is unclear. The rift between *Coetus* and *Conferentie* was healed in 1771 by John Henry Livingston, an American born minister trained at Yale who went to Holland and crafted a workable compromise (Bruggink and Baker 2004:55).

Although many of New York City's colonial carvers have not been identified by name, their distinct carving styles are easily recognizable. Each carver brought his own interpretations to common cultural images such as cherubs, death's heads, flowers, and urns and willows. Moreover, their lettering styles were distinct (Williams 2000). However, much of their artistic work remains uncatalogued. Zuricher carved simple cherubs, often smiling, and ornamented with flowers, tulips, and topped by hair or a wig often represented by a row of interconnected spirals. Zuricher's markers typically have a tripartite shape that consists of a larger central arc, almost always containing a cherub, and two smaller shoulders. The shoulders may be decorated with spirals or with numerous small circles forming a flower and petal-like design, made with a compass (Fig. 14.5a). The sides of his stones tend to be undecorated or marked by a simple shallow linear border. His English competitors, Ebenezer Price in Elizabeth, New Jersey; Uzal Ward in Newark, New Jersey, the Lamsons in Massachusetts and Stevens in Rhode Island, also carved cherubs. Many of the stones they carved show cherubs wearing wigs. Zuricher's cherubs were often square and blocky or pear-shaped with distinct chins (Fig. 14.5b). Unlike his contemporaries in New Jersey, Zuricher rarely ornamented the borders of his stones. He did however carve crowns, representing the deceased crowned in heaven and even on occasion what appear to be feathered headdresses and perhaps pineapples atop some of his cherubs. He sometimes ornamented the tympanums or top portion of the gravestones with finely carved floral decoration. The level of ornamentation likely reflected the stone's cost and the client's ability to pay.

Over time Zuricher's work evolved. Some have attributed his earliest markers to a proto-Zuricher period (Welch 1987:44). These early markers are quite curious. They show cherubs, but cherubs with bulbous heads lacking wigs, and sometimes with a series of small triangles in the forehead region. Later markers are more standardized, with clear, sometimes very elaborate wigs, and well-shaped faces. The iconography on Zuricher's stones reflected the religious and cultural symbolism of eighteenth century America. Zuricher was a man of his times, and he knew what his consumers wanted, so he carved the culturally popular images of cherubs. However, he added his own personal interpretation of the cherubs with their pear-shaped or squarish faces and either a square or pendant-like chin. Sometimes he added a crown over the cherub's head. The cherubs' wings were scalloped indicating feathers (Williams 1994:57). His carving was generally bold. Therefore, his carvings are easy to recognize. His lettering was also distinctive. His L's often end in an upward slash, his W's consist of two overlaid V's, and his S's tend to terminate in curious little finials. He also had identifiable lettering, and sometimes placed a small trumpet-like slash after the end of an inscription or simply his name below the inscription (Fig. 14.6a). Scholars of folk art believe that the stones carved in "the style of John Zuricher" are the work of his apprentices.



Fig. 14.5 (a) Zuricher carved this cherub decorated marker with tight spirals at the tops of the sidebars, another design he favored (Photo: Richard Veit). It is located at the Old South Church Cemetery in Bergenfield, New Jersey. The translated text reads: Here lies the body of Johannes Loots, who was born February 25th, 1700 and died January 6, 1764. Note that the cherub is crowned. (b) Zuricher carved this stone for Hannah Thorn with a smile on the cherub and a crown. Note that Hannah's last name is different from that of her husband, Cornelius Van Wyck. Dutch women often retained their maiden names after marriage (Photo: Richard Veit). The gravestone is in the Fishkill Dutch Reformed Burial Ground, New York



Fig. 14.6 (a) Garret Bogert's gravestone (1777) in the Clausland Cemetery, Rockland County, New York, shows both circles at the tops of the side bars and Zuricher's signature at the bottom of the stone (Photo: Richard Veit). (b) Hanis Zuricher's signature on the side of the Altje Brinckerhoff marker in the Fishkill Dutch Reformed Burial Ground, New York (Photo: Richard Veit)

Zuricher's stones also provide information about colonial trade networks. Happily for researchers, he occasionally signed his work. These signatures are generally found near the bottom of the marker just above the grass line. In a few instances, his name is carved so far below the inscription it seems that he intended it to be buried (John Smith, 1771, White Plains), and in at least one early case (Altje Brinckerhoff 1749, Fishkill, NY) he signed on the side of the marker (Fig. 14.6b). These signatures and his predictable carving style allow his work to be readily identified.

Deetz (1977:76–90) noted that in New England there were numerous carvers who served a very local client base, and that they carved their own distinct version of death's heads and cherubs. Deetz (1977:73) further mentions that there were occasional carvers, such as the Lamson family in Charlestown, Massachusetts, whose stones were found throughout New England and were part of a regional trade network. Today researchers recognize that carvers such as the Stevens Family, and Gabriel Allen of Newport, Rhode Island, shipped their stones up and down the Eastern Seaboard (Levine 1978; Combs 1986; Little 1988; Veit 2006). Zuricher, working in New York City, found it easy to link into not just a regional trade network but also to an East Coast trade network, something that Gaynell Stone first documented (Levine 1978). Purchasers up and down the eastern seaboard, perhaps

individuals with family connections to New York, ordered his gravemarkers. One even survives in Charleston's Huguenot Graveyard (Combs 1986:1). However, most of the markers he carved were erected in and around New York City. Although a complete catalog of his work is beyond the scope of this study, and many markers have been lost due to the destruction of colonial burial grounds, Zuricher markers have been identified at dozens of different burial grounds in New York City, the Hudson Valley, Long Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey (Appendix A). More undoubtedly exist.

Colonial gravestones, including Zuricher's stones, reveal information about class. The families who could afford gravestones would have been middle or upper class members of society, while the poorer members of society would have used wooden markers, which have not survived, or left graves unmarked. As early as the 1620s, Dutch officials established a Potters Field in Nieuw Amsterdam (Sloane 1991:24). The English continued the tradition of Potters Fields, and the New York City Almshouse also had a burial ground. During epidemics, there were even trench burials in cemeteries. Today, these burial grounds are lost and forgotten, except when they are discovered during construction projects.

Of the Anglican churches in colonial New York, Trinity Church cemetery was regarded as "the burial place for the city's English elite and also much of the rest of the Protestant English population" (Sloane 1991:19). From 1760 to 1776, Zuricher carved stones for families affiliated with Trinity Church. Nineteenth century industrial pollution and twentieth century acid rain have all contributed to the erosion of these colonial gravestones in Trinity cemetery. Today, the 37 stones carved by Zuricher or in his style at Trinity are still readable. There are five more Zuricher markers at St. Paul's Chapel. Others have undoubtedly been lost to weather and the ravages of time.

The presence of stones by Zuricher in Trinity churchyard speaks to his ability to appeal to an elite population, but, even in more rural locations, it is clear that he could alter his carving to suite his clients' taste and pocketbook. However he generally avoided the elaborate floral sidebars employed by New Jerseyan Ebenezer Price, his apprentices, and imitators. Carvers often charged by the letter, so the lengthier the inscription the greater investment on the part of the bereaved purchaser. In fact, a handful of Zuricher's markers have small numbers cut near the grass line, which indicate the number of letters in the inscription. Bearing this in mind, the large well-carved stone, and lengthy inscription, indeed resume, on the gravemarker of Jeremiah Stanton buried at St. Andrew's Episcopal Churchyard on Staten Island (Fig. 14.7a) is that much more impressive.

Here Lyes the Body of
 Jeremiah Stanton,
 Esquire Born in England at Lynn Regis
 In the County of Norfolk, January the 3rd
 1739 Who From His Earliest Days Living
 Devoted Himself to the Service of His
 Country Supported with Honor the
 Respected Name of His Ancestors
 After the Conquest of Martinico his Health
 Being Impaired by the Vicissitudes of a



Fig. 14.7 (a) Jeremiah Stanton stone from St. Andrew’s cemetery on Staten Island (Photo: Carl Forster). (b) Sara Martensense gravemarker in Flatbush Dutch Reformed Churchyard, Brooklyn was carved by John Zuricher (Photo: Richard Veit). The inscription reads: “Here is buried the body of Sara Martensense wife of Jan Lefferts. Died in the 36th year of her life. Buried January 1st, 1763.” Note the lines to guide the carving and the trumpet like mark after the inscription

Toilsome Life, He Retired from the Army
 Having Served as a Captain in the 60th or
 Royal American Regiment of Foot Ever Since Its
 Creation and Died on the 23rd of September
 1771 Louisa Theresa his Widow has Erected this
 Monument to His Memory

Other markers cut by Zuricher contain only the most minimal information about the deceased and the stones are carved with simpler cherubs. Presumably they were less costly.

Gravestones, including Zuricher’s stones, also provide clues about acculturation. Markers cut by Zuricher in Brooklyn are almost exclusively inscribed in Dutch (Fig. 14.7b) while those found in Trinity Churchyard are inscribed in English. Moreover, those in Brooklyn generally have brief inscriptions. In the words of Gertrude Vanderbilt (1882:159):

There are no monuments in this graveyard [Flatbush Dutch Reformed Cemetery] expressive of a desire for ostentatious display, and no inflated epitaphs upon the old tombstones exaggerating the virtues of the deceased. It is noticeable that a large majority of these tombstones only give the name and age of those who sleep beneath; sometimes this is so worded as to express a belief in immortality, or to the inscription is added some simple expression of faith. There is a certain solemnity about these old Dutch words.

In New Jersey the situation was mixed, a handful of markers in the Raritan Valley are in Dutch but most of the Zuricher carved stones were cut in English. The spread of English language and English culture threatened the vitality and integrity of the diverse ethnic groups in colonial New York (Howard 2001:168). Ethnic intermarriage promoted acculturation. There was a push for locally trained ministers and services in English (Howard 2001:171). In addition, there were economic incentives for men to become “more English” in order to more easily participate in business and trade with the English citizens and government officials (Cantwell and Wall 2001:184). Some historians, such as Joyce Goodfriend (1992), have noted that the acculturation was slow, was not one-way, and involved an exchange and sharing of ideas. Meta Janowitz’s (1993) research shows that Dutch women continued Dutch foodways into the English period, thus maintaining their Dutch heritage. Other material culture studies by archaeologists show that choices may have differed family by family with some families holding onto their Dutch heritage while others became more English (Greenhouse Consultants, Inc. 1985; Scharfenberger and Veit 2002). Firth Haring Fabend (1991:242–247) has argued that middle class Dutch farmers largely withdrew from the broader American society after the Revolution and retreated into “Dutchness,” perhaps basking in the glory of a remembered golden age, or perhaps ambivalent about their role in this new America. Nan Rothschild’s (1990) study of eighteenth century New York City neighborhoods shows that while there were distinct English, Dutch, and French neighborhoods in 1701, by 1789 economics/wealth rather than ethnicity seemed to determine the choice of where English, Dutch, and French New Yorkers lived. The Anglicanization of colonial New York clearly was a lengthy process occurring over numerous decades.

Deetz (1977:88) states, “religious institutions and their artifacts are known to be the most conservative aspects of a culture, resisting change.” Therefore, in gravestones, including Zuricher’s stones, we see evidence of maintenance of cultural boundaries and cultural separation in some of the Dutch stones with the use of Dutch language (Stone 1987, 2009). But because cultural change is complex with individuals and families making choices about their identity, the gravestones also reflect those choices. Zuricher carved stones with lettering in English for clients with Dutch surnames; perhaps these were families who for economic or social reasons wanted to assimilate into English culture. One is particularly struck by the occasional Zuricher stone carved entirely in Dutch in a burial ground otherwise full of locally carved English language stones. The Johannes Martinus Van Harlingen marker in the Van Liew Cemetery in New Brunswick, New Jersey is a good example (Fig. 14.8). The gravestones reflect the agency of individuals and families in making those choices. The choice also reflects economics (cost of the stone and price for choosing a particular carver), availability, and marketing—all parts of the eighteenth century consumer revolution that influenced consumer behavior (Veit 2009).



Fig. 14.8 The Johannes Martinus Van Harlingen gravemarker, Van Liew Cemetery, New Brunswick, New Jersey is one of Zuricher's later stones (Photo: Richard Veit).. The inscription reads: "On the 11th of January 1684, Johannes Martinus Van Harlingen was born at Westbroek in Holland. He died the 22nd of October 1768 at Lawrence's Brook in New Jersey"

Conclusion

In looking at Zuricher's life we see the story of the development of American craftsmanship in the time of British mercantilism, which sought to suppress American industry. It was also a time of competition for these early carvers. Historic documents and extant gravestones demonstrate that Zuricher had several talented competitors, especially Ebenezer Price (Elizabethtown, NJ), Uzal Ward (Newark, NJ), and Thomas Brown (New York City). This competition sometimes led these carvers to advertise by carving their own names on the base or rarely the sides or back of the headstones. The placement of these marked stones in specific cemeteries may hint at new markets and communities that these carvers were breaking into. For instance, prior to Zuricher's 1776 arrival Rockland County New York had very few professionally carved markers. By the time he died, they had become the norm, with his work dominating. Zuricher, like the other master stone carvers, used an apprentice system. He trained young carvers and they helped to increase the productivity of his workshop. This in turn enabled him to provide gravestones to a large number of clients. He saw the growing independence of American craftsmen. When he started his career there were pronounced differences between the Dutch and English citizens, but over time these differences softened and there was more acculturation of the Dutch—these changes are reflected in his stones. With his connection to New York's broader trade networks, he saw the city evolve into a major port. He also lived through two major social upheavals: the divisive clash between New Light Pietist ministers and their more conservative adversaries in the Dutch Reformed Church, and the American Revolution. Both may have shaped his work. Finally, his markers survive today as tangible reminders of early American craftsmanship, patterns of production and distribution in colonial New York, and religious beliefs.

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Appendix A

New York

Brooklyn (Kings County)

- Flatbush Dutch Reformed Churchyard
- Flatlands Dutch Reformed Churchyard
- Gravesend-Van Sicklen Cemetery

Dutchess County

- Fishkill Dutch Reformed Burying Ground

Manhattan

- St. Paul's Churchyard
- Trinity Churchyard

Nassau County

- Old Baptist Churchyard, Oyster Bay
- Fortified Hill Burial Ground, Oyster Bay
- Floyd-Jones Burial Ground, Massapequea
- Sands Burial Ground, Sands Point
- Smith Burial Ground, Nissequogue
- Townsend Burial Grounds, Nassau County

Queens

- Alsop Burial Ground, Long Island City, Queens
- Grace Episcopal Churchyard Queens
- Lawrence Manor Burial Ground, Steinway, Queens
- Old Springfield Cemetery, Queens
- Hewett Burial Plot, Great Neck

Rockland County

- Clausland Cemetery
- Germonds Road Cemetery
- Tappan Cemetery

Schenectady County

- Vale Cemetery, Schenectady

Staten Island (Richmond County)

- St. Andrews Episcopal
- Blazing Star Cemetery

Suffolk County

- Cutchogue Burial Ground
 - Jamesport Burial Ground
-

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Long Swamp Burial Ground, Huntington Station
 North End Graveyard, Southampton, Suffolk
 Old Town Cemetery, Huntington
 Southold Presbyterian Churchyard

Ulster County

Kingston Dutch Reformed Burial Ground
 New Paltz, French Huguenot Cemetery

Westchester County

First Presbyterian Church, White Plains
 First Presbyterian Church, Yorktown
 Old Van Cortlandville Cemetery
 St. George's Church/St. Mark's Church, Mt. Kisko
 St. Paul's Church, Mt. Vernon
 St. Peters Church, Peekskill
 Tarrytown Dutch Reformed Cemetery

New Jersey

Bergen County

Church on the Green, Hackensack,
 Moffat Road Lutheran Cemetery, Mahwah
 Old South Church (Dutch Reformed), Bergenfield

Cape May

Trinity Methodist Church, Marmora

Middlesex

Alpine Cemetery, Perth Amboy^a
 Cranbury Presbyterian Burial Ground, Cranbury
 St. James Burial Ground, Edison
 St. Peter's Churchyard, Perth Amboy
 Van Liew Cemetery, New Brunswick^b

Monmouth County

Middletown Presbyterian Burial Ground
 Old Tennent, Marlboro
 Yellow Church, Upper Freehold Township

Somerset County

Harlingen Reformed Churchyard, Montgomery Township
 Lamington Presbyterian, Bedminster
 Van Nest-Weston Burial Ground, Hillsborough

This table is based on research by the authors as well as conversations with John Zielenski and a review of Richard Welch (1987), Gaynell Stone (1987), and Patricia Salmon's (2004) publications.

^aThis marker was likely moved from Perth Amboy's colonial burial ground which was located in the approximate location of the McGinnis School. Construction of the school eliminated the burial ground. However, some markers were relocated. Contemporary documents note the presence of the Gabriel Stelle marker, found next to the Zuricher carved marker for Margaret Hodge (d. 1775), as being located in the State Street of Presbyterian Burial Ground (Clayton 1882:630)

^bThe Zuricher carved marker found in this burial ground was likely relocated from New Brunswick's Presbyterian Burial Ground

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Chapter 15

Wiert Valentine: Cartman of New York City Politics, Food and Drink in Early Republican New York

Charles D. Cheek

Wiert Valentine: Cartman

New York City after the Revolution almost exploded in size. From the end of the Revolution until 1790 it increased from 10,000 to 30,000 and then doubled to 60,000 by 1800 (Hodges 1986:81). The story I am going to tell is about Wiert Valentine, a cartman. He hauled goods around New York in his two-wheel, horse-drawn cart. Ancient law restricted him from hiring people; so he was a one-person business with all the benefits and problems that entails. Hauling goods needed no special skills like artisans needed, but it was important to the commerce of the city. Again by ancient law and custom, cartmen, merchants, and the Corporation of the City of New York had a close relationship because they could not exist without each other.

This occupation was so important to the merchants and to the general wellbeing of the city that the cartmen, like various skilled artisans, were granted the freemanship. The freemanship had rights similar to a freeholder but without the property requirement. Artisans were granted freemanships on application because they were important to the commercial interests of the city and its merchants. The freemanship provided the cartmen with the right to vote, as well as access to “lucrative public appointments and lower level political jobs” (Hodges 1986:3, 81).

Wiert, and cartmen in general, are difficult to fit into either the lower class or the middle class as we think of them although these terms were coming into existence by the early nineteenth century, at least in New York City. Cartmen and other mechanics were placed in the “lower class” as early as 1795 when a broadside encouraged merchants to prevent a member of the “lower class,” a cartman, from being elected to the city Common Council (Hodges 1986:81). At the same time as labels were being developed, behavior was changing so different groups not only

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bought different dishes and glasses to set on their tables, but also put different foods and drinks in the dishes and glasses. This was, of course, a continuation of trends that started before the Revolution but which were accelerated by the rapid development of capitalism.

I have written this story as an autobiographical interview with a retired cartman, Wiert Valentine (1762–1818). Wiert was asked to talk about his life as a cartman in New York (from at least 1796) for a newspaper article.

The Interview

Well, I know you know that cartmen are important, otherwise you wouldn't be here talking to me. But I'll tell you how important. I used to run the commerce in New York City—that's right, but that's a joke too—I used to run it *around* the city in my one-horse cart. But my fellows and I were important. We had the commercial interests of the city at heart and had a strong bond with the merchants, at least most of the time, because they cannot get along without us. We were also important in city politics.

I came from Bergen County after the Revolution. I crossed the river from New Jersey because the work in the city as a cartman was good. In the first 2 years after the British left the City, the Council authorized 320 cartmen and they all got freemanships. I came in a later wave and as a result did not get a freemanship with my license.

Many of my neighbors were veterans. We came to New York to become cartmen and help with the rebuilding after the devastating British occupation and the fires that wrecked parts of the town. We used our two-wheeled carts drawn by one horse to move debris, earth, rocks, and trash for construction and clean up projects. This was besides the work of moving goods from ships to stores and from warehouses to ships. Our work usually increased as New York's trade grew quickly during the years immediately after the revolution. I also moved many products necessary for daily life, like firewood. Even before the British occupation we had used up all the wood on the island of Manhattan for firewood and had to import firewood from up the Hudson or Long Island or New Jersey.

I made enough money in those early years to buy a lot in Ward 6 in a new block laid out by the Barclays on the north edge of town on their Calk Hook Farm. I bought that lot in 1796. The property was close to the Fresh Water pond that we cartmen were filling as money was available. They said it was a noisesome hazard and they were right it did stink. But, as I thought at the time, the real plan was to build houses on it and they did and it became the Five Points.

I tell you I was surprised when I dug my first privy on my new lot. I found bones falling out of two walls. Before I bought the property, I was concerned that these lots might be in the Negro burying ground but the agent for the Barclays assured me that their survey proved the cemetery was south of my property line. I didn't want to deal with those bones; I filled the hole back in. Besides, Harriett, a free Negro

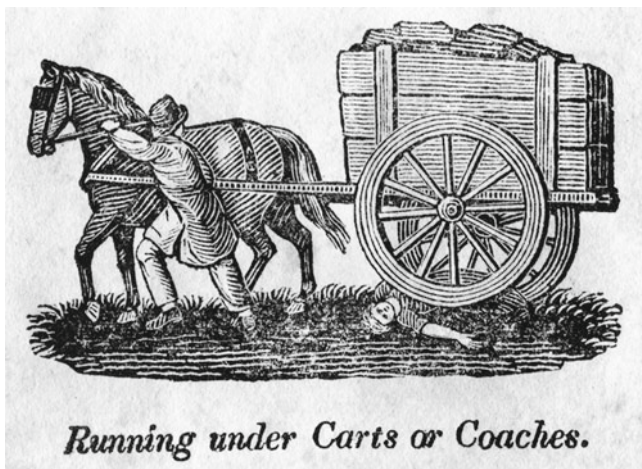


Fig. 15.1 “Running under Carts or Coaches” from *A Book of Caution for Children* (Day 1828) (Courtesy of Graham Russell Hodges)

woman from Bergen County, was living with us for a while and it didn't seem right to put a privy there. She helped around the house some but also worked downtown for wealthier folk.

There were other people on the block from New Jersey, like our neighbors the Vreelandts. They came from Bergen County too and we knew some people in common. I thought at first we would get on well; but Vreelandt, he was from a merchant family, and they do things differently than we do. I also think he believed what people said about us cartmen that we are loud, quarrelsome, rowdy, and noisy, with no concern for the public safety.

It is true there are some cartmen who were all those things and they gave the rest of us a bad name. And sometimes children got run over, although it was mostly their fault, or women got scared when some of the rowdier cartmen pretended to run them down (Fig. 15.1). But in general we were industrious and made the city run.

We drank like everyone else. After work we went to the taverns in our neighborhoods or Martling's on Broadway or Mrs. Amory's and drank and talked about politics and sporting action like bullbaiting. We drank cider, rum, beer, and got whisky from Pennsylvania. There was some wine but we didn't drink it much and the merchants who did drink it didn't come into our taverns much unless they wanted our vote.

When we talked politics, it could get noisy with the Federalists arguing with the Republicans. There were the people like Alexander Lamb who was the head of my group of cartmen. He was one of the old cartmen let in after the war and given a freemanship. He was a staunch supporter of the Federalists and got his patronage jobs as a result. He was head of the first class or division of cartmen, head of a New York regiment, and inspector of streets in the sixth ward. Then there were the others, the majority, who did not have freemanships. We stopped getting freemanships after 1787 because the Federalist mayors Duane and Varick, that pig, did not want to give

voting privileges to any more of the “lower class.” Do you believe that they wanted to deny the veterans who fought for freedom during the Revolution the right to vote for people who would govern them in the city? And even those who had a freemanship were under pressure all the time to vote for Federalist candidates.

Some of the cartmen were old-timers from before the Revolution, or had been in the early group awarded freemanships, and were used to this connection with the Federalists and benefited from it. Why close to two-thirds held some patronage post by 1800, and another third of them were firemen as well. I can understand why they might not want to vote for the Republicans. And even if they wanted to, they would have to stand up there in front of the Federalist election inspectors and sometimes the candidates and announce their choice. Then they would have to worry if the merchants, mostly Federalists of course, would give them work. Instead they might give the work to cartmen who showed the proper subservience (as Varick said) and voted the way they wanted. The city could even take away their license.

One day my wife Metje went shopping and brought home this jug to use in making flip (Fig. 15.2). It has a monkey riding an ass, which says it all about politics in New York. Although I can’t write, I can read a little and it says

Behold an ass a monkey strides
Who kneels while he gets up and rides
To monkeys asses always submit
Each day gives instances of it

These politicians did a good job of controlling the voters until the Republicans finally got enough power in the state to fix the right to vote for those that deserved it.

Since I owned my own house, I was a freeholder and could vote without the freemanship. I could afford to vote Republican because if I had fewer jobs, I always had a house to live in that I didn’t have to pay rent on. But that is why I didn’t get a patronage job until after the Republicans won the Common Council. The first time I got the watchman’s position was in 1803. But then I was suspended for no good reason and it wasn’t until 1805 that I got a long-term appointment. The extra money for these patronage jobs could be important. The night watchman’s wage was 50 cents a night and it was paid every week. That was about a third of a cartman’s regular daily take, in good times.

Even though I did not have a patronage job to bring in extra money, I could make more than some artisans I know, about \$1.50 a day depending on business. I made enough so my wife could buy the new things in the shops and the right food.

My wife liked to use the things that remind her of life in Bergen County with her Dutch relatives. She bought the popular Bohemian glass from Europe engraved with birds (Fig. 15.3) and pottery plates with many colors of flowers and vines for our tea. She also bought one of those black teapots because she heard someone say that a woman’s hand looked better on that than on another teapot. I think it must have been Mrs. Vreelandt next door. My wife liked to visit Mrs. Vreelandt who was friendly but as I said Mr. Vreelandt was too much a merchant. They buy things that they hope will make them fit in with the merchants downtown like the Chinese pots and lead glass tumblers from England. We didn’t have the Chinese pots but had the nice blue and white teaware (Fig. 15.4).



Fig. 15.2 Creamware jug with a political satire transfer print from Lot 15, Feature 56 (290 Broadway collection; Cheek & Roberts 2009)¹

My neighbors, the Vreelandts, ate differently too. My wife said that Mrs. Vreelandt's slave brought fish home from the market every week. We ate fish only once a month or so. Harriett, the Negro who lived with us for awhile, says the rich

¹ The artifacts in these images were lost in the destruction of the World Trade Center, where the collection was stored, and thus could not be rephotographed.

Fig. 15.3 Tumbler with a Bohemian-type polychrome enameled decoration of a white bird perched on a blue heart, Vessel 128, Lot 15, Feature 56 (290 Broadway collection)



Fig. 15.4 Ceramics from Vreelandt household including vessels similar to those found in the Valentine household: sepia floral design, hand-painted pearlware tea bowl and pitcher; polychrome floral design, hand-painted pearlware tea bowl; chinoiserie transfer printed plate; blue hand-painted chinoiserie pearlware saucer (china glaze); pearlware dipped, checkered bowl; polychrome floral design, hand-painted pearlware tea bowl; creamware large mug; and New Hall triangular teapot. The sepia hand-painted pitcher and tea bowl on the left and the New Hall triangular teapot on the right were found only in the Vreelandt deposits (290 Broadway collection)

merchants downtown are always eating fish and fowl. The Vreelandt's slave was always buying chicken and occasionally some pheasant in the market. For special occasions, we would have a chicken or goose or some pigeons but never pheasant.

Me, I like beef. Chicken and fish are fine now and then but beef is better. There's nothing like ribs. I don't like mutton much either but when we eat it we like the loin. The neighbors ate a lot of leg of lamb.



Fig. 15.5 Representative table glass: two tumblers and a flip glass (Five Points collection)



Fig. 15.6 Representative wine glasses (Five Points collection)

The drink I like is a flip (Fig. 15.5). There is nothing like a flip that's been heated with a hot poker in the cold of winter after you come in from standing in the cold all day. My wife makes a good flip also. She gets some beer from the tavern, mixes it with gill² of rum, egg, and pumpkin. Most people use sugar instead of pumpkin but I think pumpkin flavors it better. Back then you always needed something to flavor the beer because it wasn't very good. We drink some wine at home but mostly we use the wineglasses for fruit cordials that our relatives in the country made (Fig. 15.6) Vreelandt of course drank plenty of wine as did my neighbor a couple of houses

² A gill is four ounces or ¼ of a pint.

away. He was an upholsterer and he dealt with people who could afford his trade and was in their houses so he must have gotten the habit from them.

I'm not sure what happened to Vreelandt. He moved almost as soon as he heard the street was going to be raised leaving us at the bottom of an 18-ft deep well. He owned the property for a couple of more years and rented it to a carpenter, but sold it when he found somebody willing to tear down the house and fill in the lot up to the street level.

That street raising was a tragedy for me. Here I had the best house on the block down in a hole. Nobody wanted to buy it so I had to live there for 7 more years. I got the night watchman's job again in 1805 and kept it for 3 years before I got suspended for sleeping in 1808. I admit I slept, but it's not like I hadn't been caught before. I think, as usual, they wanted to give the job to someone more ready to do their wishes. I remember the year because that was the year of Jefferson's embargo and I could have used the money. But we managed. I sold the house 2 years later after the kids were out of it. After that, I wandered about the other wards from house to house like most of the cartmen. I could not afford to buy another house and so had to rent and when times were bad and when I did not have the rent I just moved.

Well, I am retired now. I have seen a lot of changes and most haven't been for the good. But I have had five good children and a good wife and good friends. It's been nice talking to you. I hope you get a good story out of this. And don't get run over by a cart on your way back to the newspaper! Good-bye.

Story Construction

The context for the story comes mainly from Hodges' (1986) book on the cartmen of New York. The outline of Valentine's life history comes from public records of various sorts. Wiert was one of the first people to buy a house lot on what became Lot 15 on Block 154 after it had stopped being used as the African Burial Ground. The lot was in the 290 Broadway Site (Cheek and Roberts 2009) and was known as 74 Duane after 1836 (formerly 12 Barley from 1805 to 1808, and then 96 Duane between 1809 and 1835). The project was part of the overall Foley Square project that included the Five Points excavations (Yamin 2000) as well as the African Burial Ground excavation at 290 Broadway (Perry et al. 2006).

Wiert (sometimes listed as Wert, Weart, Ernst, or Mark) Valentine worked as a cartman and dock builder and bought the property in 1796. Valentine's house was probably substantial as his property had the highest real estate value (\$1,400) on the street, even though the lot was average size (New York City Tax Assessments 1799). Valentine's personal estate, however, was only worth \$100. He dug several privies on the property and one of these, Feature 77, cut through four burials from the African Burial Ground. The stratigraphy, the scarcity of artifacts, and the location of the bones in the strata suggest it was never finished.

The 1800 federal census lists Valentine as being between 26 and 44 years old (based on his reported age at death, he was 38) and the family lived in Manhattan from at least

1796 until 1818. The 1800 census notes that Wiert and his wife Metje (née Meyer) had two boys under 10, two girls under 10, and a girl between 10 and 16 years old living with them. These match the ages of his children and there may have been another girl born slightly later (Multer.com 2005). Given Wiert's age in 1800, he would have been 24 at the start of the Revolution and could have actively participated in it.

He does not appear in the New York tax assessments before 1796 nor in the directories. The tax assessments suggest he did not own property in New York City before then. The directories stress long-term residents and more-established individuals and so are ambiguous about his early presence in New York City but there is evidence that he was living in Bergen County, New Jersey, before he moved to New York. He appears in the 1793 New Jersey tax list as having property in Bergen County (Jackson 1999). Wiert's first three children were born in Hohokus, Franklin Township, in Bergen County, New Jersey. His fourth was born in 1797 in New York City (Multer.com 2005). Since he bought his house in 1796, he may have come to New York with some money. Alternatively, as suggested in the "interview," he came to New York in his late twenties and took advantage of the opportunities to gain enough money to buy his lot. The work may have been as a cartman although we do not have any direct evidence of that. He was also listed occasionally as a dock builder or a laborer (Longworth 1796–1820).

After the Revolution, many people saw being a New York cartman as a profitable opportunity (Hodges 1986:69–71). In the first 2 years after the Revolution ended (1783–1785), the Common Council authorized 320 cartmen and granted them freemanships (Hodges 1986:69).

In 1805, Wiert was listed as a cartman in the second class, operating cart number 85 (Longworth 1805). In that year, there were 1,200 cartmen in the city, each with his licensee number painted on the side of his cart (Hodges 1986:2). The classes of cartmen were organizational units developed in 1788 to help regulate and oversee the drivers. A foreman, who handled problems, headed each class. The classes were not hierarchical—each class had the same responsibilities, privileges, and prestige as the others (Hodges 1986:78).

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, cartmen formed an important special-interest group within New York. The number of licenses awarded by the city limited the number of cartmen. The city also regulated the amount they could charge for each haul, allowed them to own only a single horse and cart, and forbade them from hiring full-time employees. Although considered semiskilled work, a career as a cartman was desirable for many of New York's population. Once licensed, cartmen often kept their jobs for decades and passed their businesses on to their children (Hodges 1986:37–38). Cartmen's incomes varied. In 1785, cartmen made between 25 and 50 cents a day when skilled artisans made about 55 cents a day (Hodges 1986:75). Yet, during the trade embargo with England between 1807 and 1809, when jobs were scarce, the political clout of the 1809 cartmen enabled at least some of them to have city-sponsored, relief-project jobs. These earned them \$1.75 a day, well above the standard wage for skilled labor (Hodges 1986:118).

As essentially city employees, cartmen often were appointed to minor government positions, such as inspector, measurer, and watchman (Hodges 1986:72).

Valentine followed suit by holding a night watchman position for the City of New York. He is listed in the Common Council Minutes of 4 April 1803 as a night watchman in Jacob Hays' Company of the Third District. Graham Hodges (1986:73) notes that being a watchman was a part-time job that in 1789 brought in 50 cents a night for what was light work. On 15 August of 1803, Valentine was suspended for an undisclosed reason and replaced the following July. In December of 1804, he was allowed back on the force as a substitute and in February 1805 was appointed to Captain Gobels Company, replacing the deceased John Doremus. Valentine kept this position until August 1808 when "Captain Anderson...suspended Weart Valentine for sleeping at his post." After this suspension, Valentine is not listed again as a night watchman (Common Council of the City of New York 1917[3]257, 375, 564, 651, 684; [5]243).

Cartmen were an important cog in New York's commerce but had an uneven relationship with the merchants and other upper and middle class people. Hodges depicts the relationship as mostly one of mutual need but punctuated by disruptions, especially during economic downturns. The rowdy behavior of the cartmen became more subject to criticism during periods of economic stress (Hodges 1986:79,116, 120–121).

The cartmen were regulated by the city, which often led to disagreements between the city and the cartmen. These disagreements were aggravated by the lack of any representation on the City Council. One reason for the lack of representation was the lack of voting rights for most of the cartmen.

During the first 20 years after the Revolution, the suffrage in New York City was based on the rules of the last colonial municipal charter, which had property qualifications. Municipal charters restricted the suffrage to property holders of a certain value or others who fostered the economy of the city. This was considered appropriate in the ideology of the time. The main role of the city government was considered to be financial management and therefore those who contributed to the city's economic wellbeing should run the city (Keyssar 2000:30–31).

Besides property holders, freemen were also granted the vote. The freemanship was the vehicle for granting suffrage to small merchants, artisans, and other workers who did not meet the property qualifications.

Another purpose of the freemanship was to create a "bond of attachment" among the laborers and municipal government (Hodges 1988:5; see also Tiedeman 1997:27). The freemanship created a workforce supposedly loyal to the interests of the municipal government and the merchants that ran it. In return for this loyalty, the cartmen had exclusive privileges including protection from competition from outsiders like farmers or African Americans and access to the patronage rolls of the city government (Hodges 1988:5–6).

Both the first (James Duane) and second (Robert Varick) mayors of New York, members of the Federalist political faction, made their expectation of loyalty clear and expected the freeman to vote as they directed (Hodges 1988:12–13). However, the Federalists did not have much faith in this expectation and were generally opposed to liberalizing voting qualifications. Starting with Duane in 1786, the city began to refuse to grant freemanships to the carters except in special circumstances (Hodges 1986:69).

The number of people allowed to vote in municipal elections was limited to freeholders owning property worth at least 20 pounds (\$50) and to residents of the city admitted as freemen. In 1790 the number of potential voters in municipal elections was only 28% compared with the 62% of adult male residents who qualified to vote for the state assembly. Federalists also benefited from voice voting. People had to voice their vote in front of at least two Federalist election inspectors and sometimes the candidates as well (Burrows and Wallace 1999:330).

During the late eighteenth century then, there were increasing numbers of carters without the freemanship and many of them had expectations that they should have had it and with it the right to vote. This expectation is not surprising considering that two thirds of the cartmen were veterans of the Revolution (Hodges 1986:71). Many among the cartmen shifted their loyalty from the Federalists and threw their support to the Republicans in the 1790s (Hodges 1986:81–107).

The Federalist mayor Varick and the cartmen were on such bad terms by 1791 that he revoked all their licenses, if only temporarily. In 1795, the Republicans attacked the Federalist mayor by printing broadsides showing a pig, while attacking Varick's policies. Varick's name approximated *varken*, the Dutch word for "hog."

Varick recognized his mistake of constantly antagonizing the cartmen by 1799 and rewrote the city laws governing the cartmen to include many features and protections of the freemanship, but not the franchise (Hodges 1988:16). This was not enough to save the Federalist control over the new Common Council. Strengthened by state and national political events, in 1801 the Republicans took control of the state assembly and the Council of Appointments, which had the power to make all appointments, authorized by law, and replaced Mayor Varick with Edward Livingston (Hodges 1986:105). However, it was not until 1804 that the Republican-controlled state government passed laws that overrode the municipal charter and enfranchised property holders and \$25 rent payers and established the secret ballot (Burrows and Wallace 1999:330).

The course of the relationship between the Republicans and the cartmen was not smooth. One policy that affected the cartmen was the Jefferson Embargo of 1807–1809. Because of worsening relations with the City Council and economic stress brought on by the embargo, the cartmen seemingly became rowdy and disrespectful of the middle class pedestrians in New York (Hodges 1986:116–117). This was the year when Mayor Willett asked all 1220 cartmen to turn in their licenses for inspection (Hodges 1986:117).

The hardships resulting from the embargo helped turn the cartmen's loyalty back to the Federalists. This lasted until 1818. Whatever their loyalties, their votes were always sought by both parties (Hodges 1986:119–128). The politicians would visit their taverns in the sixth and eighth wards, where most cartmen lived, to seek their vote (Hodges 1986:84, 111).

Living at the same address with the Valentines were Thomas Meyers and his family, an African-American woman named Harriett, and Martin Ramsey. Meyers was also a cartman. He lived there from at least 1800 until the Valentines moved out in 1809. In 1800, Valentine's household included a middle-aged man and woman (probably Meyers and his wife), two children under ten, and a woman over 45 (U.S. Government, Bureau of the Census, 1800). As the two families shared the house for

at least 9 years, and Metje's maiden name was Meyer, it is possible the two families were related. This fits a pattern noted by Hodges (1986:38) in which cartmen were often related by marriage and descent. Further, cartmen congregated in specific neighborhoods. For example, in 1801, 89% of the city's cartmen lived in the Sixth and Seventh Wards (Hodges 1986:110). On Block 154, nearly 5% of the block's working inhabitants were employed in the transport trades. The block's inhabitants included members of the city's leading cartman families, such as the Ackermans, Blauveldts, Browsers, Days, and Bogerts (Hodges 1986; Longworth 1798–1820; New York City Tax Assessments 1799–1825).

Little is known about Harriett, who also lived on the lot. The census lists no age or last name, making her nearly untraceable. The census does suggest, however, that she was free. Hodges (1999:176, 178) mentions that many free Negroes from Bergen County moved to the city from the rural areas of Bergen County.

Valentine seemingly kept interests and contacts with family in Bergen County. He was involved with a tripartite indenture agreement in 1804. In the indenture agreement he agrees to take responsibility for Elizabeth Fredericks who had “unhappy differences” with her husband Richard Fredericks. As part of the separation agreement, Frederick transferred a piece of land in Bergen County to Wiert for the support of Elizabeth. This woman was probably Wiert's sister Elizabeth. It is through this transaction that we learned he could not sign his name (Bergen County Deeds U:267;U306).

In 1810, Valentine sold the New York property to John West (New York City Tax Assessments 1810). Directory entries suggest the Valentines and the Myerses went separate ways. Following a general pattern for cartmen at this time, the two families left the Sixth Ward and moved north to the newly developed Eighth and Tenth Wards (Hodges 1986:123). The Valentines are listed on Thompson Street in 1811, Broome and Second in 1812, and Broome and First in 1814, and 38 Crosby in 1816 and 1817 (Elliot and Crissy 1811; Longworth 1811–1817). Thomas Myers is listed at Budd Street in 1810, Sullivan Street in 1811, and Otters Alley near Thompson in 1820 (Elliot and Crissy 1811; Longworth 1811–1820). The Valentines' and Myers' new neighborhood, eight or nine blocks to the north, was unlike the neighborhood around Block 154. There cartmen and laborer lived next door to gentlemen and merchants, while working class and small business owners predominated in the new neighborhood. The 1816 and 1819 New York City Censuses show cartmen, carpenters, and artisans dominating these areas.

Shortly after the “interview” both Wiert and his wife died. He died of pleurisy in 1818 at the age of 56. He was living at Crosby Street and listed as a laborer when he died. His wife, aged 53, died of typhus a year later. Both were buried in the Middle Dutch Church Cemetery on Liberty Street in Manhattan.

Epilogue

Robert Fitts (Fitts and Cheek 2009) conducted the historical research. I conducted more research on Valentine and his times and analyzed the material from the Valentine and Vreelandt house lot. The data on the material culture was produced by the project analysts who included Michael Bonasera, Steven Brighton, Diane

Dallal, Amy DiScipio, Heather Griggs, Kerri Holland, Meta Janowitz, Cheryl LaRoche, Marie-Lorraine Pipes, Paul Reckner, and Stuart Tray. The data about foodways comes from the analysis of the data from both the Five Points (Milne and Crabtree 2000) and the 290 Broadway households (Cheek 2009; Pipes 2009; Raymer and Bonhage-Freund 2009) and is supported by data from other cities (Cheek 2002; Milne and Yamin 2002).

As I prepared this chapter I intended to write it in the third person. But, as I read more about the times and the politics and Valentine's problems with the patronage system and with the city planners of the times, I felt that his story could better be expressed in the first person. As in all such stories, I have had to take liberties with interpretations that made sense to me, but may have been interpreted differently by another author. This is especially true of expressed views about politics and people. However, these were seemingly convincing because at least two people (one at each verbal presentation) thought the story came from a real newspaper interview.

As part of the editing of the story line, I left out the tripartite indenture agreement in Bergen County, since it did not fit into the story line. But it is an interesting story in and of itself. Also I did not include the coresidents in his house, the Meyerses. Some portion of the artifacts came from that household.

Research done after the original paper was written suggests that my earlier interpretation of Valentine, as a young eager cartman in the 1780s and early 1790s, is probably wrong. He seems to have lived in Hohokus, Bergen County, until he moved to New York as a mature man with a family and with some money. Perhaps he left New Jersey to make a better living for his children, perhaps he had been a farmer and sold some land to purchase his lot and build his house. In any case he must have had some kind of connections to be appointed as a cartman so soon after moving to New York. He could have been working as a cartman in New York before he moved but ideally one had to be a city resident to be a cartman. However, these rules were not codified until 1799 so it is possible Valentine could have worked as a cartman earlier (Hodges 1988:16).

As others have said, this recasting of research into a story led me to examine the data from a different perspective, especially the foodways data. How would people in the city know what their neighbors were eating especially if they were in different classes? I resolved this through imagining the visiting between the wives and the report of talk between the African Americans—one enslaved and one free.

The presence of an African-American woman, Harriett, in the household presented an opportunity to speculate on interpersonal relationships. Initially, I was inclined to assume she was a servant, but servants are not generally included in the census records. Harriett had her own separate entry in the census, on the line between Valentine and Martin Ramsey. The fact that the privy that cut through the African-American graves was apparently never used and backfilled suggested a generalized respect for the dead or a superstitious dread. I chose the former and extended that to assume that he would be more open to African-Americans than some others, particularly if the family had known her in Bergen County.

I also struggled with trying to convey the difference between the food found in the Valentine and Vreelandt privies. Besides, what exactly were the privy contents telling us about foodways? The people ate the food surely, but what time period

does a privy represent? Was it a month, a week, several months? Without an answer to this question, we don't know how often fish was eaten. We have to assume, as I have done in analyzing the food remains from the privies (Cheek 2002, 2009), the abundance of the different animal classes reflect the "normal" behavior of the families involved.

The other issue that struck me after I had finished the piece was one that also has been addressed by others: how much of the story is my projection of the present, my interests, into the past? This was emphasized when the two people in separate audiences said that they thought the story was being quoted from a contemporary newspaper. The core of the story is conflict over voting rights, patronage, and party politics. Why did my audiences and I agree the response of Valentine was plausible—because these are issues that resonate with us today? Did the audience approve of the story because we shared stereotypes about how political parties manipulate power to preserve power? Perhaps these issues were not that important at the time. Although based on Keyssar's work (2000), this is not likely. Whatever the answer to this question, this story has provided me with an opportunity to integrate the archaeological remains with the larger political concerns of this important period in the formation of the country.

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Chapter 16

Evidence of Public Celebrations and Feasting: Politics and Agency in Late Eighteenth-Early Nineteenth Century New York

Marie-Lorraine Pipes

Introduction

At the end of the Revolutionary War the United States emerged as a nation hardly able to stand on its own political and economic feet. The former colonies were barely united, composed of a heterogeneous mix of people who spoke different languages, were ethnically diverse, and shared little in terms of religious or political ideologies. The formative years of the United States were difficult and the state of the nation remained fragile for a number of decades. Forging a strong sense of national identity was a priority necessary for uniting the people and obtaining support for the federal government.

Days of national celebration were a major venue for inspiring patriotism. In towns and cities across the country national days of celebration were marked by patriotic parades and large public feasts. Historic newspapers chronicled these events describing the composition of parades, marchers and important dignitaries, and related events such as speeches, public spectacles, and feasts. Parades were hierarchal in design, stratified by marching groups that were arranged in order of social and political importance. Symbols, colors, songs, and slogans reinforced a shared sense of national identity, common values, and shared ideology. Feasting on a grand scale was an important component of these celebrations. Food and drink fueled a sense of community and good will. Newspaper accounts further described the role of beef in national parades and at feasts. Dressed oxen were roasted whole, festooned and paraded through the streets, finally to be carved up at feasts.

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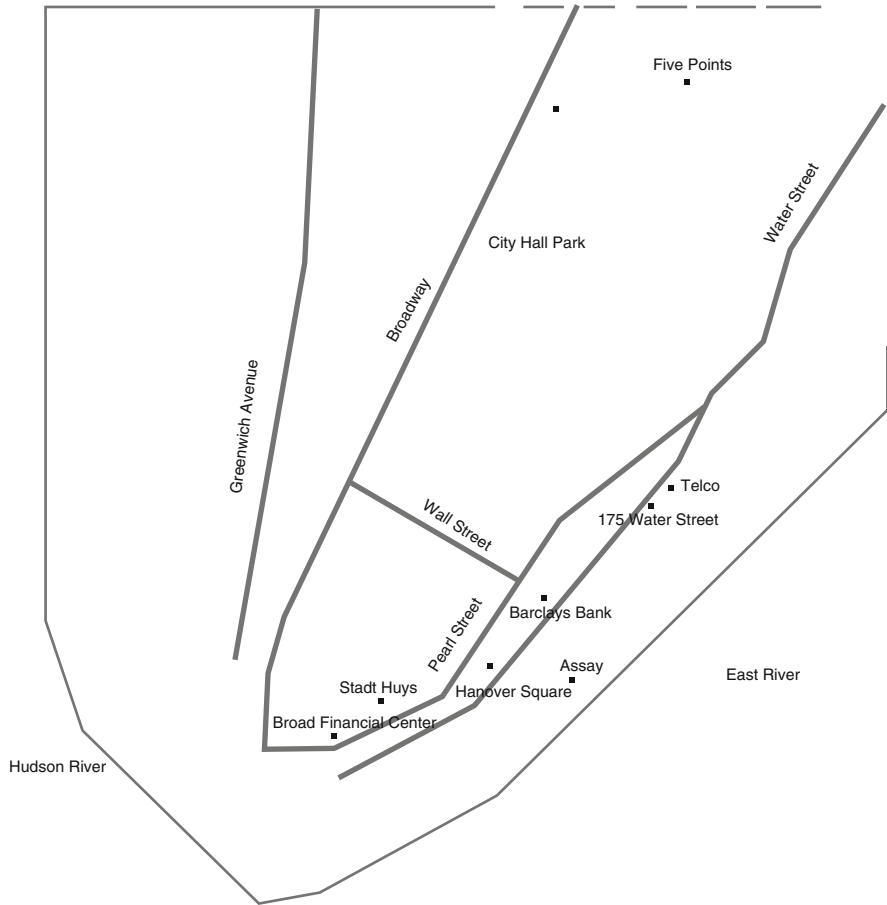


Fig. 16.1 Some archaeological site locations in Lower Manhattan. (Drawn by the author)

In 1984 the excavations at the Assay Site in lower Manhattan (Fig. 16.1) encountered two large wooden box features containing dense concentrations of faunal remains (Louis Berger and Associates 1991 herein LBA). Both faunal deposits were dominated by beef remains though they also contained large quantities of other large mammals, birds, turtles, and fishes. Beef carcasses were identified as present based on butchered longbones that were reconstructed along sawed lines and on articulations. Other lines of data supported the identification of these deposits as the remains of large public feasts. In addition to faunal remains the box features contained dense concentrations of ceramics, glass, other artifacts, and botanical remains. One of the boxes was assigned to the household of Cortland van Buren. Sets of monogrammed porcelain bearing the initials “CVB” served to associate the deposits with Cortland van Buren, a wealthy grocer and a Sachem of the Tammany Society (Fig. 16.2).

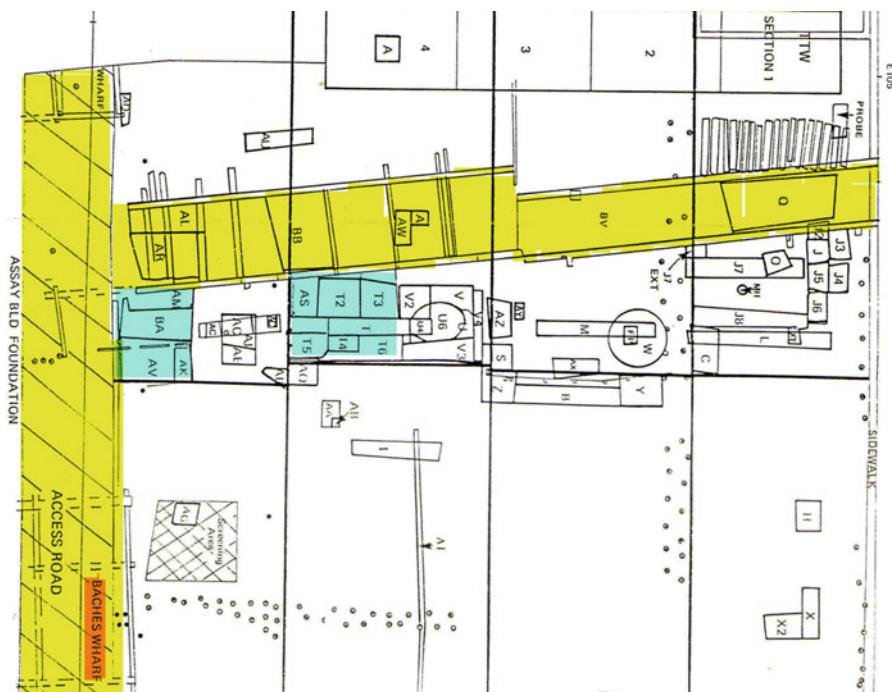


Fig. 16.2 Assay Site Plan (Louis Berger & Associates Inc. 1991). The box privies are highlighted in blue: Units AM, BA, AV, AK; AS, T and T2 through T6. The Van Beuren privy is on Lot 6 to the left and the other is on Lot 7, to the right

The highly patterned faunal refuse deposit was used as the basis for generating a set of criteria for identifying public feast-related deposits in urban settings. The analysis led to an investigation of the complex layers of social processes believed to be instrumental in creating the faunal deposits and highlighting the possible roles Cortland Van Buren played as an agent of the Tammany Society of New York and as an important business man in New York City during the early 1800s.

The Role of Public Celebrations, Parades and Feasting in the Creation of Identity

Feasting is a group behavior observed historically and ethnographically, though rarely archaeologically, across time and space. The feasting group may be composed of related and unrelated people. Feasting is associated with rites of celebration; it involves social gatherings typically composed of individuals above the

nuclear household level, for the purpose of consuming food. Rites of celebration occur for many reasons. They may be cyclical and tied to a calendar, such as harvest festivals and religious holidays, they may be triggered by a unique event such as a death or a wedding, and they may be commemorative honoring a person or event. Rites of celebration vary in content and composition though they often share common elements one of which is feasting. Feasts are clearly socially important events that occur for many different reasons. However, the most common social denominator for feasting is simply to mark a moment in time by celebrating an event important to the group.

In historic archaeology, the literature is almost completely silent concerning evidence of feasting where faunal remains are concerned. A survey of New York City archaeological sites and deposits revealed that currently no other faunal assemblage of this type has either been recovered archaeologically or described, the latter most likely being truer than the former. Site reports surveyed include City Hall Park, Five Points, 290 Broadway, 175 Water Street, Broad Financial Center, Barclay's Bank, Tweed's Courthouse, Telco Block, 7 Hanover Square, and the Stadt Huys Block (Baugher et al. 1990; John Milner Associates 2000, 2009.; Geismar 1983; Greenhouse Consultants, Inc. 1985; Louis Berger and Associates Inc. 1987, 1991; Hartgen Archaeological Associates Inc. 2003; Rockman et al. 1983; Rothschild and Pickman 1978; Rothschild, Pickman, & Boesch 1982).

In order to understand the archaeological, cultural, and historical significance of the Cortland van Buren faunal assemblage, consideration must be given to identifying the kind of event, or series of events, which may have generated this type of context. Prehistoric archaeologists have given the topic of feasting much more consideration and it is to these studies that one must turn. One feast-related study from North America involved ritual remains from the McPhee Village Site, AD 850–900 associated with the Dolores Anasazi (Potter 1997). Potter discusses feasting as a form of ritual behavior involving groups of people beyond the household level. The sharing of food in a ritualized setting provides a milieu where important social relationships are created (Ibid.). He merges his ideas with those of others (Rappaport 1968; Johnson and Earle 1987; Lipe and Hegmon 1989), to suggest that communal rituals serve to maintain social cohesion. Although these ideas are based on non-western, non-modern societies, they are relevant because they address group behavior. Hodder makes the point that it is necessary to interpret the behavior of groups within their social context (Hodder 2000). The social interpretation and meaning of potential feast contexts can only be understood in terms of specific cultural values and with the awareness that these events took place for reasons known to the participants (Hodder 1985).

In recent years archaeologists have begun to consider the potential applications of agency and practice theory in their work. The theory of agency considers the power and influence of individuals or agents on the structure of their society. One venue in which individuals may exert power and influence is by hosting or promoting rites of celebration. Probably the most famous of all such agents are the Caesars who promoted themselves politically by facilitating gladiatorial events. The ethnographic literature provides clues as to why individuals or special interest groups promote and

sponsor celebrations and feasts. Individuals who host these events derive benefits either directly for themselves or for their group. The benefits are intangible for the most part, involving the creation or strengthening of social ties such as loyalty and support, and debts of gratitude and obligation as a consequence of being gifted, as well as conspicuous displays of power to impress or intimidate competition. On historic sites it is often possible not only to know the names of former residents but many details of their daily lives as well. The recovery of feast-related contexts should signal that the person or group responsible for the creation of the deposit was involved in something above and beyond daily activities. The historical, economic, and social contexts affecting these people or groups can be reconstructed both archaeologically and through documentary resources: archaeological data can be augmented through the use of documents and anthropological research.

Identity—cultural, ethnic, or national—is a way of contrasting or distinguishing one group from another (Anderson 1991). Identity is defined either internally by members of the group or externally by “others.” Identity may be a positive benefit to a group or it may damage them by denying them access to goods, services or property Waldstreicher, among others, has made persuasive arguments concerning the rise of identity and nationalism in the Americas and the use of print media to infuse a sense of solidarity in the population of the newly formed United States (Waldstreicher 1997, Ryan 1989; Newman 1997; Anderson 1991). Parades were a performance medium through which social messages and political agendas were conveyed. State agents used parades to promote nationalism and solidarity. To achieve a sense of shared national identity, the ruling elite created a standard protocol for celebrating national holidays and strategically scheduled these days of celebration throughout the calendar year. Parades and communal feasting were parts of these celebrations.

The former colonists celebrated more than George Washington’s birth, Independence Day, and various other American holidays. In the two decades immediately following the Revolutionary War the Americans and the French were extremely close allies and Americans celebrated every one of the French major military victories against the English and Russians during the Napoleonic Wars. It was not a random choice that the United States’ national colors were the same as those of France or that both made use of the concepts “liberty and equality.” Anyone entering a major American city on a day of national celebration would have recognized the event seeing red, white and blue decorations, banners of “liberty” and “equality,” parades, and public feasts, which of course included food and drink. This standardized protocol for celebrating national holidays remains evident in the United States to this day. The best example of this protocol takes place on the 4th of July, or Independence Day. This is the most important communal national holiday in the United States celebrated throughout the country by decorating buildings with red, white and blue festoons, and flags, as government officials, fraternal groups, and marching bands parade through the streets and public feasts are held.

Ryan (1989:134) defines the term *parade* as “that ritualized, collective movement through the streets that took a distinctive form in nineteenth century America.” She further states that American parades enrolled a great portion of

their local populations, which were structurally divided into social groups reflecting political parties, trades, and other groups. Almost any group could march. In order to distinguish themselves from the audience, groups invested in decorations and costumes. While parades were typically sponsored by the city, private groups could sponsor public celebrations as well, such as the Masons and Tammany Hall in New York. Ryan goes one step further and points out that celebrations involving parades are distinct from holiday festivities. Holiday festivities tend to be shared by smaller groups related in some way and reflecting more intimate values. Parades promoted a set of values for large populations. The social units marching in parades projected information to the public revealing which groups were powerful and influential in a given city.

In American parades large numbers of the citizenry were organized into units referred to as “platoons,” “companies,” “regiments,” “ranks,” and “columns,” which marched along major public routes in each city or town. Parades were used to celebrate important events such as federal and state holidays, public works projects like the opening of the Erie Canal, and to mourn the death of major figures, such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Published accounts of parades recorded the actions of participants and observers, as well as the language expressed. Parades were generally composed of men who projected a common social identity by marching together. Parades were well attended, involving several thousand participants, both as performers and as audience. Ryan credits Geertz (1973) with saying that public performances reveal the stories that people tell of themselves, as well as Skorupski (1976) with claiming that parades reveal how things ought to be (Ryan 1989). The authors of parades were distinct individuals and groups operating within a social and political milieu. The meanings they created were embedded within the ceremonies and events that they designed reflecting the concerns of their time.

Historians generally do not elaborate on the role of feasting when they discuss the importance of parades in creating national identity in the United States. Feasting is merely mentioned as one event in the sequence of public celebrations. However, the connection between parades and feasting is important. Those who were in power either politically or financially in major cities recognized parades as a means by which people could be influenced. Feasting, as noted above, benefits those who host or promote them, and they create a setting within which social bonds are formed.

Historians, such as Waldstreicher, Ryan, Newman, and Anderson among others, have demonstrated that parades were used by the ruling elites as a public venue to promote their political and economic agenda and to instill in Americans a sense of shared cultural identity (Waldstreicher 1997; Ryan 1989; Newman 1997; Anderson 1991). In New York City the Tammany Society was one such group that influenced local and national politics. The Tammany Society was a fraternal organization that became the foundation upon which the modern-day Democratic Party is based. Political factions like the Tammany Society used public support to promote their objectives and candidates at the local and national level. Within this context Cortland van Buren, a leader of the Society, can be considered a political agent.

Archaeological Evidence from the Box Features at the Assay Site

The Assay Site, located on the lower east side of Manhattan in New York City, was excavated by Greenhouse Consultants Inc. under the direction of Diana diZerega Wall and Roselle Henn in 1984 (Louis Berger and Associates Inc. 1991). The site was landfilled in two stages: the first stage took place between 1780 and 1797 and was delineated by Baches' Wharf; the second stage took place between 1797 and 1803. During the excavation, late eighteenth century docks and wharves were uncovered, as well as the foundations of several buildings and their associated deposits (Fig. 16.3). Two wooden box features were uncovered that were later identified as dock privies. They consisted of large bottomless wooden boxes overhanging the dock. Each contained very dense concentrations of artifacts and ecofacts. The contents of one of the dock privies were assigned to a wealthy grocer, named Cortland Van Buren, who resided on Lot 6 on this block from 1801 to 1810, though his family continued to live there after him (Fig. 16.4). The other box, located on Lot 7, was not assigned to a household because that particular lot had a high occupancy turnover rate. The Lot 6 box contained a set of armorial Chinese export porcelain monogrammed "CVB" (Fig. 16.5). Based on a similar piece of armorial porcelain found in the Lot 7 box it is thought that the feature may also have been owned by Van Buren or to which he had use rights.

The two boxes are thought to have served as public privies during the time when ships docked at Baches' Wharf. The eastern portion of the block was filled by 1803 and so by that time the boxes no longer functioned as public privies. Though the non-ceramic Termini Post Quems (TPQs) for the boxes are 1820 and 1821 most of the contents date to the first decade of the nineteenth century, a period of time when Cortland Van Buren resided on the lot. In the winter of 1835 while the river was



Fig. 16.3 Assay wharves. (Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. 1991)



Fig. 16.4 Lot 6 box/privy. (Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. 1991)



Fig. 16.5 Monogrammed “CVB” porcelain bowls (Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. 1991)

frozen, a massive fire swept through this part of the city destroying the entire block (see Dallal Chap. 19). The absence of this burn layer, which was present in other deposits at the site, is further evidence that the boxes were capped before this time. The features are referred to simply as boxes in this discussion because they were filled after their use as privies had ended.

While the artifacts and ecofacts by themselves were not unusual, their depositional context signaled that they represented something unique, beyond an association with a household, and were more likely refuse from one or several major public celebrations. The ceramics consisted of large sets of creamware, pearlware and Chinese export porcelain, including plates, teawares, bowls, serving platters, and various other ceramic vessels. Several of the porcelain vessels were monogrammed "CVB," which clearly associated the deposits with Cortland Van Buren. In the Lot 6 box alone, over 30% of the vessels were 50% or more complete. The ceramic TPQ for the Lot 6 box was 1802 based on a transfer printed jug and 1800 for the adjoining lot 7 box. The boxes contained large numbers of wine/liquor bottles and "London" mustard bottles dated between 1780 and 1820, as well as case bottles of varying sizes and other food storage bottles, such as flacons; they also yielded Stiegel-type tumblers, and bridge fluted, hexagonally faceted, and plain drawn stemware. Small finds materials included buttons, pins, shoe buckles, toys, spoons, brushes, finials, fan parts, a veneered box, and a silver pendant stamped GW. The boxes also contained large volumes of botanical remains consisting of a wide range of fruits, spices, nuts, and vegetables (LBA 1991, see section VII for a description of the material composition).

Large-scale disposals of sets of dishes and glassware have been seen before and have been variously interpreted as a response to epidemics, as the result of a family moving out of a house, and as the discarded breakage of china shops. Simply considering the material composition of the box contents did not reveal their relevance to public celebrations. In fact, much of the box content could have come from the Van Buren household and/or from his grocery store.

Instead it was only revealed by the volume and composition of the faunal remains, and the rapid accumulation of materials, most especially beef remains. Evidence for rapid deposition was indicated in two ways. The first indication was the presence of articulated beef sides and quarters. The second indication was the presence of large numbers of matching dishes, including the "CVB" monogrammed oriental export porcelain vessels.

The faunal assemblage from both boxes consisted of about 30,000 skeletal elements. It was composed of an extremely large quantity of cattle, pig, sheep, and turtle bones, and a multitude of fish and bird remains. Cattle remains represented entire sides of beef that had been roasted, butchered, sliced up, and served: a minimum of 12 sides of beef were represented. These were determined based on their reconstruction of longbones along sawed planes and articulated skeletal elements. The carcasses had been processed into joints of meat (Fig. 16.6). Evidence that the beef bones represented the remains of consumed meat and not spoiled meat was demonstrated by the pervasive presence of parallel slice marks on the shafts of longbones, indicating the removal of meat slices. Modern estimates are that a side of beef will feed a family of four for an entire year. Assuming, for example, that a family eats beef three times a week, a side of beef equals 624 servings. Twelve sides of beef then would feed roughly 7,488 people. The beef refuse alone from the boxes would have fed an enormous number of people. Although the volume of veal, pork, lamb, fish, turtles, and birds are not discussed in detail here, they were present in large numbers as well.

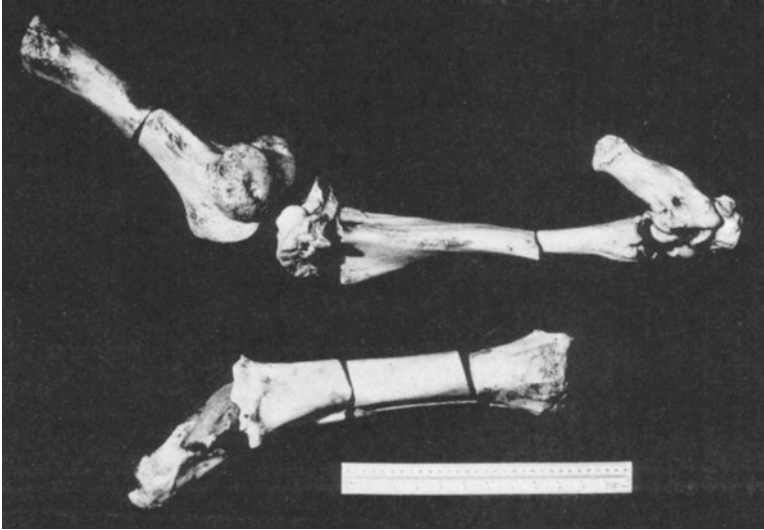


Fig. 16.6 Refitted butchered fore and hind beef limbs (Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. 1991)

Assigning Context

A systemic view of cultures implies that a dynamic relationship exists between the static archaeological record and the behaviors that generated it (Binford 1965). Cultures are composed of subsystems, parts of which are represented by different archaeological remains, which can be distinguished by comparative studies. Binford proposed that a two-step process be used in which criteria were developed for isolating a phenomenon, and that probable explanations be presented explaining how it might be understood within a cultural system. By careful observation links may be established between archaeological data and specific kinds of behavior (Watson 1991). Placing the results within an operational framework allows for further interpretation of the significance of the data (Redman 1973). Understanding depositional context is critical to distinguishing feast contexts from household contexts. It is proposed that specific faunal depositional patterns represent feast refuse, which can be related to group behavior, and that these behaviors may be interpreted by considering the ethnographic record (Binford 1967).

Identifying and assigning behavioral contexts to archaeological deposits is a common interpretive tool used by historic archaeologists in order to understand and interpret site significance. A fundamental archaeological assumption is that refuse deposits accumulate from human activities. Urban sites in North America have consistently yielded refuse deposits from a variety of contexts, most especially backyard areas, dating from the earliest colonial settlements to modern times. Archaeologists tend to designate a large portion of backyard refuse deposits as household contexts, a term used to highlight a depositional assignment of garbage to site occupants. Household associations are assigned based on a number of indicators: artifact TPQs and Mean Ceramic Dates (MCDs) that overlap with specific

tenant or owner dates of occupation; unique artifacts signaling an activity relating to a resident's known occupation; or simply based on general composition of the deposit containing objects common to households.

Faunal remains recovered from urban historic sites in the United States have been used to address a wide range of social issues at the household level, including diet, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity (Singer 1985; Greenfield 1989; Brown and Bowen 1998). These two latter issues, in particular, have received a lot of attention and are generally determined by comparing the range of species, body parts distributions for cattle, sheep, and pig, relative proportions of older and younger animals, and sometimes by conducting a cost analysis of meat cuts. While these data are sometimes extrapolated to represent neighborhoods, towns, or regions for specific temporal periods (e.g. Rothschild 1990), they remain choices made by individual households and do not generally reflect larger group behavior. Household faunal refuse deposits are recognized in the archaeological record by the presence of animal bones. Faunal refuse materials accumulate at the household level on a regular basis through the discard of refuse from daily meals and so are considered good indicators of dietary consumption patterns. Generally speaking, household faunal depositional patterns differ from that of artifacts because they tend to accumulate at a higher frequency.

Household assignments are typically determined using a combination of archaeological data and historical records such as property deeds, insurance maps, city directories, and tax records. The generation of faunal deposits by households is assumed to be influenced by social factors that such as include status, ethnicity, and wealth (Greenfield 1989; Brown and Bowen 1998; Reitz and Scarry 1985; Janowitz 1993; Lyman 1977). The kinds of decisions made by an individual household therefore are considered reflective of the social values and financial constraints operating within that unit and dependent on the resources available in the area (Huelsenbeck 1989; Singer 1985).

On occasion the composition of a deposit will be so unique that labeling the deposit as a household context is deemed inappropriate. Examples of non-household refuse contexts include the fill from 7 Hanover Square (Rothschild and Pickman 1978) and the sheet midden deposits uncovered at the Metropolitan Detention Center Site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (LBA 1997). In the first example, the faunal material was generated by the eighteenth century Fish Market located in lower Manhattan. This market generated material accumulated along one of the slips located at the East River. In the second example, the refuse deposits were located on the edge of the city of Philadelphia in the mid-eighteenth century, an area that served as the city dump. Cartmen hauled garbage to that location over a period of years resulting in the dispersal of garbage over a large area. The refuse included large volumes of household dietary refuse and artifacts, slaughter waste, construction hardware and debris, and commercial trade refuse from various craft industries. In both cases the distinctions in faunal contexts between household-related and commercial trade contexts were based on a few general traits: volume and composition of bone and the association of bone with commercial trade-related items.

Distinguishing feast-related contexts however requires something more. Feasts are associated with seasonal, calendrical events, are often repeated, and tend to involve an abundance of food. Potter (1997) identified a number of characteristics relating to

feasts, derived from his study of faunal remains from the McPhee Village Site associated with the Dolores Anasazi, which are applicable to urban historic sites (Potter 1997:359). He states that whatever species are consumed at a feast must be abundant. Furthermore, in the case of the Dolores Anasazi, they must be easy to hunt communally. This idea can be altered slightly for historic sites by stating that a given species must be easy to obtain via purchase, trade, or rearing. The final factor pertinent to historic sites is that the species must have a great meat volume. I would add that there must be archaeological indication for rapid refuse accumulation within a short period of time, e.g. butchered carcasses or single dump events, and that there should be a high frequency of repetition of the same kind of meat. In the case of the Assay box features, accumulation appears to have occurred in a series of individual quick events spread over a period of about 10 years. Focusing strictly on one meat, each beef carcass represents a single cooking event. However, there are several beef carcasses represented in each box that may represent multiple feast events over time.

Cortland Van Buren, Agent of the Tammany Society

The assignment of the Lot 6 box to Cortland Van Buren was based on its location in the rear of his lot as well as the presence of CVB monogrammed porcelains (See Fig. 16.5). The faunal compositions of the Lot 6 and Lot 7 boxes strongly indicated they were generated by feast-related events which this paper suggests might have been associated with parades. Cortland Van Buren was a wealthy citizen who was a Sachem in the Tammany Society.

Tammany Hall was the center of political power throughout the nineteenth century in New York City. Its origins lay in the Tammany Society that was founded immediately after the Revolutionary War as a fraternal organization committed to serving benevolent and patriotic causes. Its membership was composed of craftsmen, merchants, and traders (Allen 1993). The structure of Tammany Hall was hierarchical. At the top was the Grand Sachem, followed by 13 Sachems representing Tribes, and last by Braves consisting of the general membership. Members underwent a secret initiation rite. Meetings were held monthly at the Wigwam where members feasted, drank, and socialized (Fig. 16.7). The Tammany Society sponsored many public celebrations including Evacuation Day (November 25, marking the day the last British troops left New York at the end of the Revolution), the 4th of July, and Washington's birthday, among others. On these important days of public celebration "Braves" dressed in costume and marched in the parades.

The society became more partisan after the government, under the influence of Alexander Hamilton, forgave former British Tories. This angered the Tammanites and created a rift between them and the Federalist Party. As a result, the society became a strong supporter of the Republican Party, later known as the Democratic Party. This move into politics caused a drop in members affiliated with the Federalist Party (Allen 1993; Blake 1901).

Though there are no available records of the Tammany Society documenting Van Buren's role as Sachem, his election to that position is a significant indication of his social status within the community and of his power and influence. As a successful

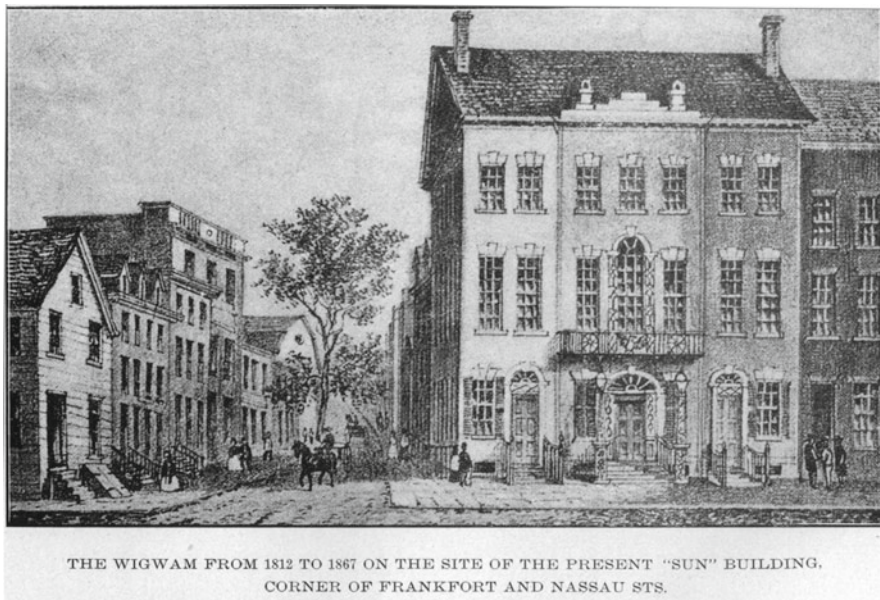


Fig. 16.7 “The Wigwam,” the Tammany Society’s headquarters 1812–1867

grocer, he had special knowledge about the food industry at that time, and most likely could muster pools of labor. Although exactly what role he played in promoting and organizing public celebrations is conjectural, nonetheless the remains of these events are evident in the faunal deposits recovered from the two box features.

Written accounts further substantiate the power and influence of the Tammany Society in orchestrating parades and their social prominence in the late eighteenth century (De Voe 1862). One of the most significant events was a large public celebration that took place on July 23, 1788¹ in preparation for New York State’s ratification of the Constitution. The event was described by Thomas De Voe, a mid-nineteenth century butcher and avocational historian, who wrote an exhaustive book on the markets of New York in which he discussed many of the events that occurred throughout the city’s history. Using eighteenth century newspapers to reconstruct the Great Federal Procession he states:

...we recognize those who took a prominent part in the “Great Federal Procession” in honor of the Federal Constitution to form these United States, which took place in this city... These gentlemen, by way of distinction, were all clad in a conspicuous uniform; that of Mr. Platt was designated by a blue coat, red sash, and white feather, tipped with black. His assistants or aids wore white coats, with blue capes and sashes, white feathers, tipped with blue, and carrying speaking-trumpets.

The procession paraded at 8 o’clock, A.M., in and near the Park... At 10 o’clock a salute of 13 guns was fired from the small Federal ship *Hamilton*, ... as a signal to move (Fig. 16.8). In the second division (of which there were ten) the butchers of this city were out in large numbers, and made a very fine display. A flag of fine linen, neatly painted, displayed on the

¹New York City was then the temporary capital of the United States.



Fig. 16.8 “The Hamilton” in The Great Federal Procession of 1788

standard the coat of arms, viz., three bullocks’ heads, two axes crossway, a boar’s head, and two garbs, supported by an ox and a lamb, with the motto, “Skin me well, dress me neat, And send me aboard the Federal fleet. (Fig. 16.9)”

...After leaving the Park, they proceeded down Broadway into Whitehall Street, turned into Great Dock Street, ... up through Hanover Square into Queen, ... Here, at the corner of Wall Street, they passed an emblem representing the “Thirteen States,” enclosed in a circle of about two feet in diameter—Thirteen Stars; ten of which were brilliant, one (designed for New York) half illuminated, and two almost obscure, with the initials of North Carolina and Rhode Island. On they went, through Queen Street into Chatham, up Division into Arundel; turning to the left into Bullock Street, and through Bullock into Bayard’s Lane, to the high grounds known as Bunker’s Hill or Bayard’s Mount...

On the eastern slope of this hill were ten extensive tables, loaded with provisions... These tables projected in direct angles from one common center, which was a little elevated, for the use of the members of the Congress, civil and legislative magistrates, and strangers of distinction... The butchers on that day furnished a capital bullock, weighing in the quarters one thousand pounds, which they roasted whole, and presented to the procession in general (De Voe 1862:316–317) Fig. 16.10

While this event may have been far more elaborate than other celebrations that took place in New York City, the description lays out the protocol that was followed for these types of events, including the parade, the dignitaries, the elaborate nature of some of the displays, and the feast itself. It provides us with two very important clues to understanding the significance of the Van Buren deposits. First, the men responsible for arranging the parade are described as distinguished gentlemen wearing feathers. There is no doubt that the men wearing feathers in the parade were members of the Tammany Society. The entire cast and arrangement for the parade was published in the newspaper (*Daily Patriotic Register* July 23, 1788, Fig. 16.11). And second, the description informs us of the prominent role beef had as a celebratory food. A bullock was paraded through the city, slaugh-

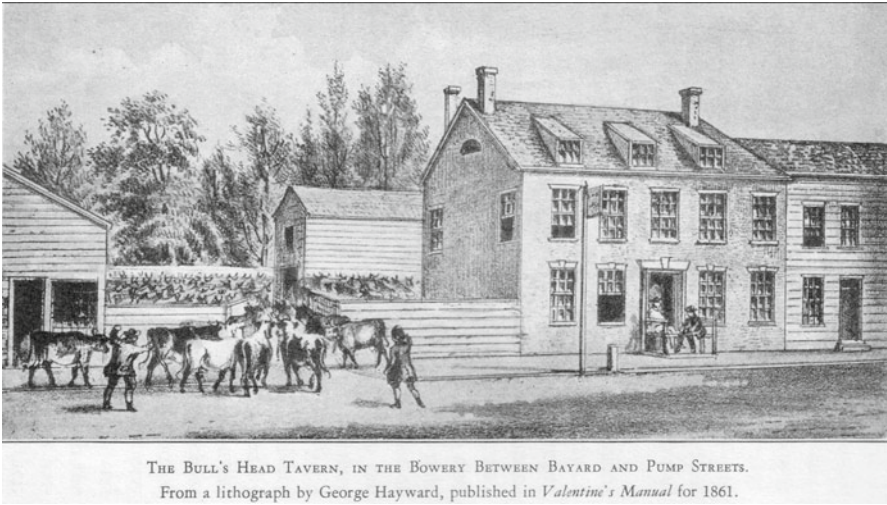


Fig. 16.9 The Bull's Head Tavern. *Valentine's Manual* 1861

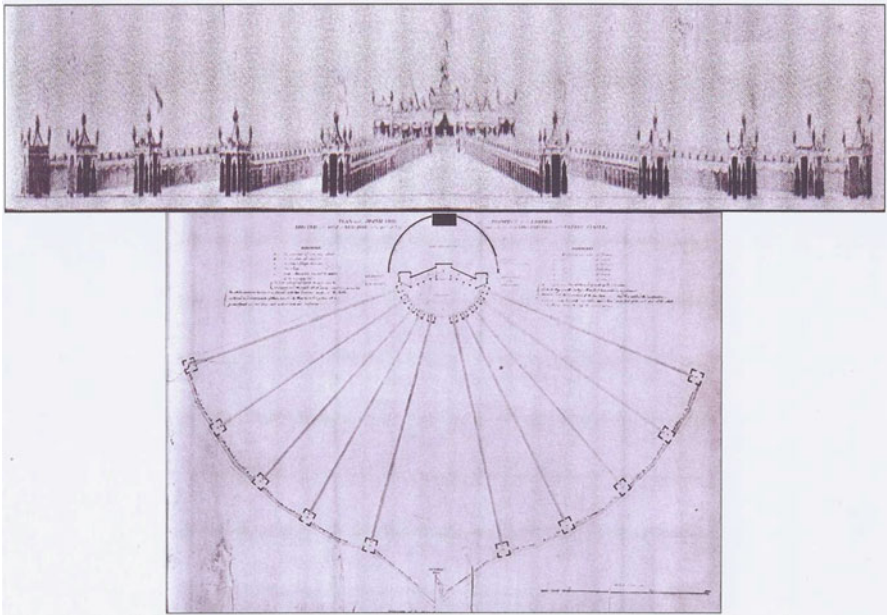


Fig. 16.10 Lafayette Drawing

tered at the park and then roasted whole. This raises the interesting logistical issue of how butchers contended with the slaughter and roasting of a bullock no details of which were given. DeVoe however interviewed an eyewitness to the events from whom he learned that most of the beef spoiled while it was cooking as it

The PROCESSION will move in the following ORDER, viz.

LIGHT-HORSE,
BAND OF MUSIC,
CONSTITUTION,
STANDARD OF THE UNITED STATES,
ELEVEN CITIZENS BEARING THE RATIFICATION,
OX-MEN,
PLOUGH,
SOWERS,
HARROW,
FARMERS WITH THEIR VARIOUS UTENSILS,
BREWERS,
CARPENTERS,
GOLD AND SILVERSMITHS,
BOAT-BUILDERS,
TINMEN AND FEWTERERS,
BLOCK AND PUMP-MAKERS,
BLACKSMITHS,
CLOCK AND WATCH-MAKERS,
SAIL MAKERS,
BARBERS,
BAKERS,
NAILERS,
CLOTHIERS,
TOBACCONISTS,
POTTERS,
CARTMEN,
SHIP-JOINERS AND SHIP-WRIGHTS,
RIGGERS,
FURRIERS AND HATTERS,
INSPECTORS OF FLOUR,
MILLERS,
WEAVERS,
PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS,
CABINET-MAKERS,
TAYLORS,
COACH-MAKERS AND WHEEL-WRIGHTS,
TURNERS,
DISTILLERS,
MASONS AND BRICKLAYERS,
PAINTERS AND GLAZIERS,
SADDLERS AND HARNESS-MAKERS,
BRICK MAKERS,
TANNERS AND LEATHER DRESSERS,
COPPER-SMITHS AND BRASS-BOUNDERS,
CUTTLERS,
COOPERS,
BUTCHERS,
CORDWAINERS,
LABOURERS,
STATE STANDARD,
BATTEAU,
CAPTAINS OF SLOOPS,
MERCHANTS AND TRADERS, CLERKS, &c.
CLERGY AND CORPORATIONS of different Churches,
SHERIFF AND HIS OFFICERS,
GRAND JURY,
MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION,
JUDGES, JUSTICES, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE BAR
AND STUDENTS,
SCHOOL-MASTERS AND SCHOLARS,
SURVEYOR-GENERAL, ADJUTANT GENERAL,
AND OFFICERS OF MILITIA,
PHYSICIANS AND STUDENTS,
STRANGERS AND GENTLEMEN *not classed*,
DETACHMENT OF ARTILLERY, with a FIELD-PIECE.

At TEN o'Clock, the several Branches will attend in the Fields east of the House of STEPHEN VAN RENSSLAER, Esq; at WATER-VLEIT.—JAMES FAIRLIE, Esq; is appointed to direct the Movement of the Procession—he will be assisted by Gentlemen distinguished for the Purpose, by a White Feather in the Hat.

Fig. 16.11 List of participants and the structure of the Grand Federal Procession, 1788. (*Daily Patriotic Register*, July 23, 1788)

became tainted earlier in the day and had to be thrown out (De Voe 1862:317). Descriptions of other celebrations during the first 25 years of the new nation reveal that instead of leading live bullocks through the streets they switched to roasting them ahead of time parading the cooked carcasses through the streets festooned with red, white and blue. One last point worth mentioning is that butchers were featured prominently in all of the celebrations, always taking part in the parades, and in the carving of the roasted beef.

Conclusion

While the exact events resulting in the accumulation of the box feature faunal deposits are unknown, the processes that generated them are apparent. The application of two basic criteria, including large volumes of faunal refuse and evidence of rapid accumulation, were used in the identification of feast-related contexts recovered from urban deposits. Identifying feast-related contexts and associating them with an individual or a specific group makes it possible to consider how this social unit operated within society and to consider some of the social factors that motivated them.

It may be inferred from Cortland Van Buren's role as a Sachem of the Tammany Society that he was involved in promoting the group's agendas. The Sachems were influential men involved not only in politics but commercial enterprises as well. Individually these men exerted great influence as business men and collectively brought pressure to bear on the political and commercial developments of New York City and the United States. As such Cortland van Buren was an agent of influence and change.

The presence of feast-related faunal deposits in his backyard provides indirect evidence of his involvement in provisioning public celebrations and the disposal of the refuse afterwards. The presence of multiple beef carcasses further suggests that his involvement in parades and other large celebrations was a repeated behavior. From a broader perspective the faunal deposits are a reflection of the Tammany Society's efforts to promote the political interests of the Republican Party (later the Democratic Party) whose political agenda relied on public good will and support to move it forward. The deposits highlight the Tammany Society's use of parades and days of celebration to promote a sense of cultural cohesion or national identity in American citizens. Cortland van Buren and other important figures in the Tammany Society were the precursors of those who know how to wield political patronage.

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Chapter 17

Place and Memory on the City Streets: The Revolutionary War Childhood of New York’s Artisan-Mayor, Stephen Allen

Wendy E. Harris

As soon as we move to a city, we search for our own center in it.
Lucy Lippard (1997:199)

Introduction

On a sunny July afternoon in 1852, as she made her way down the Hudson River, the steamship, *Henry Clay* burst into flames. She was a day boat out of Albany, bound for New York City and was just approaching Riverdale in the Bronx. Stephen Allen, 85 years old and a former mayor of New York City, was seated on an upper deck chatting with a group of gentlemen. Suddenly, from below, came the cry “Fire!”

As the flames quickly spread from the ship’s midsection and thick black smoke engulfed the passengers, the elderly Allen is reported to have turned to a friend and asked, “What are we to do?” All around him, men, women, and children suddenly found themselves trapped by the flames that fed upon the canvas awnings and wooden planking of the *Henry Clay*. Although Allen was born during violent and unpredictable times—and although he had lost many loved ones—he had managed to live a long, productive, and relatively peaceful life. It must have been a profound shock to see a tranquil summer day transformed, in an instant, into a scene of such chaos and desperation (Fig. 17.1).

The steamer, ablaze and beginning to founder, swung around and ran full speed towards shore, ramming sled-like into the embankment of the Hudson River Railroad. She skidded to a halt, her bow resting near the tracks. Many of those on

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Fig. 17.1 Although a penniless sail maker's apprentice in his youth, Stephen Allen (1767–1852) became a wealthy entrepreneur and mayor of New York City. As a child and teenager coming of age on the city's streets, he was exposed to the artisan-republican ideals of the American Revolution and adhered to them throughout his life. He died, aged 85, in the wreck of the steamship, *Henry Clay*, on the Hudson River, July 1852 (*The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*)



board couldn't swim and were helpless as the fire burned around them. The choice lay between being burned alive or drowning. According to newspaper accounts and subsequent courtroom testimony, a fellow passenger handed Allen a length of rope so that he could be pulled ashore to safety. In the confusion, Allen vanished beneath the waves (*Albany Evening Journal* 7/29/1852:2; Hanson 2004:47, 82–83).

About 80 people lost their lives that day at Riverdale. Allen was among several notables who died, including Maria Hawthorne, sister of Nathaniel, and Andrew Jackson Downing, the famed landscape architect. Allen's body was discovered days later, a mile north of the wreck. Among the contents of his pockets was a gold watch that had stopped at 3:26 PM and a newspaper clipping containing a list of 27 maxims. "Keep good company or none" was at the top of the list, and at the bottom "Keep yourself innocent, if you would be happy." The reader was instructed to "Read over the above maxims at least once a week." The list was reprinted years later, all over the country, in newspapers and broadsides under the heading "Stephen Allen's Pocket Piece." Accompanying the maxims was a description of Allen as "an aged man of purest character...beloved and esteemed by all who knew him" (*Trenton State Gazette* 8/5/1852:2).

As I review the details of Stephen Allen's death, I find that this final element is the least surprising—the possibility that he passed his last hours reading and reflecting upon maxims advising regular habits and self-discipline. Such single sentence guides to moral conduct inspired many men of Allen's generation as they climbed the ladder of economic success during the age of Jefferson and Jackson. In Allen's case, these conceptions may have had their origins in the master craftsman's code of

conduct, which he had followed since his earliest days as an artisan (Wilentz 2004:29). He began his career as an impoverished but hardworking sail maker's apprentice, became a wealthy man, and then mayor of New York City. Throughout his memoirs (which I have relied upon to reconstruct his story), he supplies numerous examples from his own life, illustrating for the reader's edification the importance of keeping the Sabbath, avoiding debt of any sort, and frugal living.

Not at all consistent with the story of his life, however, is its termination as a result of a steamboat accident in the Hudson River. Due to his advanced age, Allen's death cannot truly be termed tragic. Still, it seems an abrupt and unexpected closing for such a long life. That his death occurred as a result of a steamboat disaster also has a sad irony to it. Stephen Allen was a product of the Age of Sail, not steam. His origins lay with the great square-riggers that cruised majestically in and out of New York's harbor. Another discordant note is the location of his death—the Hudson River. Allen had several ties to the Hudson—as a reformer who advocated for the construction of the Croton Aqueduct and Sing Sing Prison, and also as a member of the Hudson River Railroad's board—but these occurred later in life. Like many New Yorkers of this period, Allen spent his youth and the prime of his life in the vicinity of the city's East River port, which then stretched from the Battery all the way upstream to the shipyards at Corlears Hook. In his memoirs and in city directory listings, I have found him closely associated with Manhattan's teeming waterfront neighborhoods, where workshops, counting houses, storehouses, brothels, and taverns stood side by side. This is the “mast-hemmed” city of Whitman, and Melville's island “belted-round by wharves.”

Stephen Allen lived a remarkable life. Its basic facts are these. He was born in New York City on July 2, 1767. His mother, Sabina Myers, was born in Germany in 1738 and immigrated to America at an early age. His father, John Allen, was a house carpenter and a native of Brooklyn, born in 1737. Allen was the youngest of five boys and would outlive them all. Two brothers died in infancy. His oldest brother, John, became a soldier in the Continental Army just before its retreat from the city in 1776. He left New York with Washington's Army and was never seen or heard from again. Allen's other brother William, also a sail maker, was lost at sea in the late 1780s.

In 1769, when Allen was 2 years old, his father died. Sabina Allen, now a widow with three sons, sent Allen to live with his aunt and uncle at their home on Warren Street, where he witnessed many of the historic events leading up to the American Revolution. During the British occupation (1776–1783), he served as an apprentice to James Leonard, a Tory sail maker. After the war was over, Allen was on hand to witness Washington's triumphant re-entry into New York. When the loyalist Leonard family departed for Canada, Allen was released from his apprenticeship. He struck out on his own at the age of 16. Eventually he became a successful master sail maker and entrepreneur, initiating a number of innovative business practices such as buying supplies directly from importers rather than from ship chandlers. He also branched out into the sail duck business (high quality canvas made from flax), opening a sail duck store in 1808 on the ground floor of his new sail loft building in lower Manhattan. Allen weathered hard times during the trade embargo of 1807 and War of 1812. During the War, he patriotically lent the government as much money as

he could spare and supplied the U.S. Navy (on its own terms) with his entire inventory of sail duck. Following the war, the Treasury notes he had received in payment yielded a large profit. This and his real estate dealings brought him considerable wealth.

His election as president of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen in 1802 marks his entry into the world of artisan politics. In 1812 he was elected to the Common Council. His service there culminated in a three-term appointment as the city's mayor from 1821 to 1824. During his time in office he focused on such issues as prison reform, tax reform, public health, and finding a solution to the city's long-standing inability to provide pure and drinkable water to its citizens. He retired from business in 1825 at 59 to devote more time to various civic and political endeavors. He was elected a state assemblyman in 1826 and state senator in 1829. During his career, he served as a director of the Mechanics Bank, the Fulton Insurance Company, and the Firemen's Insurance Company. In addition to the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, Allen held leadership roles in various organizations and institutions including the Mechanic and Scientific Institution, New York Hospital, the American Prison Discipline Society, the House of Refuge, the New York Tract Society, and the American Bible Society. His most important contribution to the city occurred long after he was mayor. Since his appointment in 1833 to the chairmanship of the state water commission, he had doggedly pursued efforts to develop and complete the Croton Aqueduct. Although he lost his seat on the commission after the Whigs gained control of the state government in 1840, he was on hand to join the citywide celebration marking the arrival of Croton Reservoir water on October 14, 1842.

Allen was married three times and outlived all of his wives. In 1788, when he was 21 years old, he married 17 year old Sarah Marschalk with whom he had eight children. Following her death in 1802, he married Sarah Roake, with whom he had another nine children. In 1839, Two years after her death, he married for a third time to Caroline Middlebrook Ross. His memoirs, begun in 1825, end with Caroline's death in 1847. As described above, he died on July 28, 1852, in the wreck of the Hudson River Steamer, the *Henry Clay*. At the time of his death, he was chairman of the board of trustees of the New York City Marble Cemetery and was buried there in a vault with other family members (Allen 1988; Bender 1987:86–87; Hughes and Munsell 1892 [VII]:283; Iverson pers. com. 2009; Koeppel 2000:247–248, 283; White & Co. 1895 [IV]:256).

Although no single biography is devoted to Allen's life, he appears in a number of works about New York City history. When historians write about Stephen Allen, what comes across most clearly is their admiration for his lifelong adherence to the egalitarian ideology of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian urban artisan class. Thomas Bender (1987:87) concludes, "For all [Allen's] worldly success he remained till his death a mechanic, never seeking the status or culture of the merchant/professional elite of the city." Paul Gilje and Howard B. Rock (1992:123) tell us that "[Allen's] experience during the war and his pride in American republicanism were constant throughout his life." For Sean Wilentz (2004:72), Allen is the "exemplar" for what he terms "a new social type, the enterprising artisan politician." His commitment to this ethic would endure even as he became a wealthy man with a townhouse on

Washington Square and seats upon the boards of railroads, banks, and insurance companies. By 1835, the year Allen moved uptown to live among the merchants and gentry, he had become a Jacksonian Democrat, a party with a political lineage linking it directly to artisan-mechanics—a class whose goals and aspirations played such an important role in advancing the ideals of the American Revolution (Allen 1927:101; Wilentz 2004:172–174). Indeed, in middle age, Allen remembered reading aloud from Thomas Paine as a child, and recalled that the words inspired in him “a feeling of reverence for those engaged in the cause of their country, which has never left me to this day, but has rather increased with the increase of years” (Allen 1927:8).

In the essay that follows below, I propose that the continued importance of artisan-republican ideology in Stephen Allen’s life was to some extent derived from his sense of place—his personal “rootedness” in the city of his birth. Delores Hayden (1997:18) describes place “as a source of memory...a weave where one strand ties into another.” I suggest that the weave binding Stephen Allen to New York City was composed of memories traceable to his childhood and adolescence in the years immediately before and during the Revolutionary War.

Having taken the death of an old man as a starting point, I return to the beginning years of his life in order to understand the adult he would eventually become.

Sense of Place

For some time I have been interested in questions regarding “sense of place” and how it is experienced in both rural and urban settings. Working intermittently as a researcher and historian for a planning organization based in rural southeastern New York State, I have explored the ways in which life stories, the surrounding landscape, and local history affect residents’ relationship to their communities (Harris 2005). However, because I have lived for most of my adult life in New York City, I have often wondered how such questions might play themselves out in urban neighborhoods and city streets. Certainly, as I walk through my own Manhattan neighborhood of Morningside Heights or the neighborhood of East Harlem where my daughter attends elementary school, I experience an attachment to these places based upon many of the same ideas and feelings I have heard expressed by people who live in rural environments.

Yet there is much in cities that would mitigate against attachment to place. A noted theorist of place, the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977:6), has observed “if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.” Hearing this, I immediately think of the sensation of ceaseless motion in New York City—traffic, subways, and crowds of pedestrians rushing down the sidewalks. Tuan (1977:140) has also commented upon “permanence as an important element in the idea of place.” He explains, “things and objects endure and are dependable, in ways that human beings with their biological weakness and shifting emotions do not endure



Fig. 17.2 By the time the Telco Block archaeological investigation began in 1981, the Square Rigger, a neighborhood bar located on Front Street, at the edge of the South Street Seaport Historic District, was all that remained of Stephen Allen’s 1808 sail loft and sail duck store. It was demolished shortly after this 1981 photograph was taken (photograph by Historic American Buildings Survey)

and are not dependable.” However, New York City, with its constant cycles of demolition of the old and construction of the new, transforms its streetscapes at a dizzying rate. In a matter of months, entire city blocks vanish and are replaced with office towers or high-rise luxury apartment buildings. In fact, this is what happened to the South Street Seaport Historic District and its immediate environs—the neighborhood where Stephen Allen once lived and worked and where I first encountered him in the course of an archaeological excavation. Not only is there almost nothing left on these streets of Allen’s life two centuries ago, there’s very little left from the time I worked there 30 years ago.

In 1978, the year I first arrived in the South Street Seaport neighborhood, a portion of Allen’s 1808 sail loft was still standing near the corner of Front and John Streets. One of the few surviving structures on the block, it was then the home of the Square Rigger, a well-loved neighborhood bar. You could stand in the bar’s doorway and look out across what had once been Burling Slip, catch the scent of salt air, and glimpse the seagulls hovering above the masts of the *Peking*, the Seaport Museum’s restored clipper ship that was moored next to a pier just beyond the East River Drive. Mostly local artists hung out at the Square Rigger, side by side with fish market workers. It wasn’t unusual to see a line of fishmonger’s hooks dangling from the edge of the bar (Fig. 17.2).

The Square Rigger had already lost its upper stories and was scheduled for demolition in order to make way for an immensely tall office building with upscale retail space on the ground floor. The footprint of the new building—to be named Seaport Plaza—would take in most of the block. Those of us who gathered at the Square Rigger after work thus did so with the bittersweet knowledge that its days were numbered. My workplace was across the street from the Square Rigger, in an archaeology lab housed in an old warehouse whose last tenant had been a seafood wholesaler. Here, in the confines of an unheated, dimly lit space that still reeked of fish, a group of archaeologists patiently processed artifacts from the Stadt Huys Site, an archaeological excavation being conducted about ten blocks away (Rothschild et al. 1987). (See Morgan Chap. 11). When we emerged from the lab, we entered a neighborhood undergoing a massive transformation from its old gritty hardworking self—the general tone being set by the nearby mob-dominated Fulton Fish Market—into a Rouse Corporation designed “festival marketplace” that would be indistinguishable from other Rouse Corporation projects in Boston and Baltimore.

Both the “festival marketplace” and the Seaport Plaza office tower were components of the South Street Seaport Redevelopment Project, funded in part under an Urban Development Action Grant and administered by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Because the Redevelopment Project was in part federally funded and was located within the bounds of a Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places, its construction had to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966—legislation that protected archaeological as well as architectural resources. As a consequence, the same effort that would destroy whatever material remains might be left of Stephen Allen’s days as a sail maker would also fund investigations into the history of the neighborhood where he had spent much of his life.

I was hired in 1980 by the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development to research the history and archaeological sensitivity of the block (known as the Telco Block) where the Liberty Plaza office tower was to be built (Harris 1980). This was my introduction to Stephen Allen and the block’s former occupants. When I first began, about two-thirds of the block’s structures had been demolished. Almost all of these had been built during first half of the nineteenth century. Only the southern end of the block still held buildings, including the Square Rigger, which was now shuttered and awaiting the bulldozers. Archaeological excavations started in the summer of 1981. Diana Wall served as the Principal Investigator, with Jed Levin and myself assisting in the oversight of the fieldwork, artifact analysis and preparation of the final report (Rockman [Wall] et al. 1983). A number of the archaeologists who had been working in the fish-infused darkness of the Stadt Huys lab now happily moved across Front Street, back into the open air and sunlight (Fig. 17.3).

During the Telco Block excavations, we dug in what had once been the backyards of the demolished (and soon to be demolished) buildings. This is where we believed we would find undisturbed soils that might contain archaeological remains left behind by the block’s earlier residents. A small patch of backyard still survived behind the Square Rigger and it too was included in the hopes that we would find something related to Stephen Allen—possibly even artifacts associated with his



Fig. 17.3 The Telco Block/Block 74 archaeological investigation can be seen in the foreground of this 1981 view facing east across a portion of the South Street Seaport Historic District. Beyond it is the Schermerhorn Row Block and the East River, where restored vessels belonging to the South Street Seaport Museum are docked (photograph by Historic American Buildings Survey)

trade of sail making. Unfortunately, it turned out that much of the Square Rigger’s backyard had been disturbed by the construction of an air-conditioning unit and a building extension (Rockman [Wall] et al. 1983:162). Allen, however, unlike so many of the people studied by archaeologists, had generated a fairly substantial documentary trail. As a result, even when the sail loft and everything material associated with it were gone, there was still a good story left to tell.

Now, years after the completion of the Telco Block excavation, I find myself occasionally drawn back to memories of working in the South Street Seaport Historic District. These were my early years of living in the city and it was here—in this particular neighborhood—that I first felt “at home” in an urban setting. Perhaps because of this, I can’t help but wonder how Stephen Allen, living and working here nearly two centuries before me, might have experienced this same city and this same neighborhood.

Recently, as part my efforts to interpret how rural residents of an upstate community perceive their relationship to the local landscape and history, I came across a passage in an article by Edward S. Casey (1996:24–25) reading as follows: “... moving between places corresponds to an entire *region*, that is, an area concatenated by peregrinations between the places it connects.” Puzzled by these unfamiliar words, I consulted *Webster Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (1981). There I discovered that “concatenated,” refers to entities being linked together in a series, or chain, each depending upon the other. “Peregrination” refers to an act of traveling or traversing, a sojourn, an excursion on foot, and a

journey from place to place. As for the “places” linked together in Casey’s (1996:24–25) understanding of region, he refers to them as “securely holding memories” which are then “released in [his] presence.” Places thus “gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts.” The “Dreaming” of the aboriginal landscape of Australia, with its ancestral memories, is for Casey, “an intensely gathered landscape.” He sees the relationship between place and memory in our own day-to-day American lives as not so dissimilar:

Yet even when I recall people and things and circumstances in an ordinary place, I have the sense that these various recollecta have been held securely in place, harbored there as it were (Casey 1996:24–25).

Based upon what Casey has said, we can see why the anthropologist Keith Basso (1996:57) might conclude that a person’s expression of their sense of place is also an expression of “their own understandings of who and what they are.”

Faced with the task of reconstructing the life of the long deceased Allen, I have decided to transform him, as an act of imagination, into a Casey-like peregrinator (an archaic usage meaning traveler or wanderer, according to Webster’s) who devotes an afternoon to walking through an urban landscape filled with places in which memories are “gathered.” What if I were to identify and locate Allen’s “recollecta” as they are distributed upon the streets of lower Manhattan? Would the resulting document somehow represent an aspect of Allen’s sense of place? Following Basso, would this document also begin to express Allen’s understanding of himself? In the following paragraphs, I will accompany Allen on a sojourn through the city of his birth, noting and interpreting his memories as we go.

An Afternoon’s Peregrination, New York City, July 1808

Stephen Allen’s imaginary lower Manhattan peregrination occurs on an afternoon in July 1808. I chose this year because it is when Allen first established a residence and workplace within the blocks that I would come to know so well 173 years later. Allen has just turned 41, is in the prime of his life, and not averse to the occasional backwards glance—as evidenced by the memoirs he would eventually write. He now lives at 211 Water Street (located between Fulton and Beekman Streets) with his second wife, Sarah, who is 27 years old and about to give birth to the first of the nine children they will have together. Living with them are at least six of the eight children of his first marriage, ranging from about 7 to 16 years old. The two eldest, both boys, have probably already left home to make their way in the world (Allen 1927:52–54; Hughes and Munsell 1892 [VII]:283).

Since the beginning of the new century Allen’s life has been hectic. Although he is becoming increasingly successful, he has had his share of personal difficulties. In 1802, his first wife, also named Sarah, passed away following a long illness. That she had given birth the year before raises the possibility that her illness was related to complications arising as a result of that pregnancy. In addition to this baby, also

named Stephen, two of the children she left behind were under the age of five. Allen, in his memoirs, notes that he hired a housekeeper to care for everyone. The year of his wife's death—with a home filled with motherless children—Allen somehow managed to purchase the Water Street house, enter into a new partnership with another sail maker (Joseph Lathrop) and get elected president of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, an organization he had been active in since 1792 (Allen 1927:52–54; Hughes and Munsell 1892 [VII]:283; White 1895 [IV]:256).

In 1808, the family occupies the upper floors of 211 Water Street while Allen operates a sail duck store on the ground floor with Lathrop. The idea of combining his sail making with the buying and selling of sail duck originated with Augustus Wright, a fellow sail maker and old friend living on the same block of Water Street block (and soon to replace Lathrop as Allen's partner). The 1808 directory locates Augustus Wright at his sail duck store and home at 229 Water Street, Allen and Lathrop at their sail duck store at 211 Water Street (Allen's residence is also listed at this same address), and Allen in his own sail loft at 180 Front Street (which would become 186 Front Street after 1819, when the block was renumbered). The latter is a new four and a half-story brick building that Allen has constructed in a vacant lot purchased in 1807 (Allen 1927:52–54, 115; Rockman [Wall] et al. 1983:A-3, B-10).

180 Front Street stands on the western side of the street between Burling Slip (now John Street) and Beekman's Slip (now Fulton Street). The entire block is built upon the landfill that has steadily crept eastward into the river beginning in the late seventeenth century. In the 1770s, during Allen's childhood, this site would have looked out upon an open waterfront. By 1808, it occupies a block that has been landlocked since the end of the eighteenth century. At either end of the block, however, water is accessible in the form of the two slips protruding into the shoreline slightly beyond Front Street. (Maverick 1808; Pickman 1999:6). Now that South Street has replaced Front and Water Street as the East River waterfront, the block is no longer a center for foreign shipping and importing but instead now serves the southern coastal trade. Its new occupants include wholesale grocers, fruiterers, and artisans (Rockman [Wall] et al. 1983:14).

During the summer of 1808, 180 Front Street is already a busy place. Journeymen and apprentices are hard at work making sails on the upper floor. Because the top story has no support posts to intrude upon the open floor, they have a wide expanse of space for marking up plans and laying out the canvas. Along the sides of the building, sails needing repair are being hoisted up with a block and tackle, and then hauled in through the window. Meanwhile, at street level, ship captains, suppliers and cartmen rush in and out, checking on orders and picking up deliveries (Winch 2002:19, 69). Shortly, Allen will move the entire Water Street sail duck operation into the store located on the ground floor.

In 1808 New York City's municipal boundaries extend not much further uptown than 14th Street, although settlement thins out near present day Canal Street (Maverick 1808). It is a walking city, with a population of less than 100,000. As a hardworking sail maker, Stephen Allen is accustomed to walking. In hard times, sail makers walk the docks and visit other sail lofts as a way of drumming up work for themselves, an activity Allen (1927:40) describes in his memoirs. When work is

going well, a sail maker spends even more time on the streets, traveling back and forth between the sail loft and the docks, where a good part of the sail making process is performed. Sail makers work on their client's vessels taking measurements and testing sails. They often insist on being the first to hoist the completed sails and on being on board to deliver instructions to the crew. To do this, master sail makers must acquire all the skills of a rigger. (Winch 2002:67–71). In 1808, Allen might walk as far as Corlears Hook to visit a vessel (Morrison 1909:22). To buy his supplies, Allen may venture inland towards the center of the city, or further along the waterfront, where he will place his orders for canvas, bolt-rope, twine, thread, beeswax, turpentine, leather, thimbles, marlins and the many other tools and materials used in the sail loft. (Allen 1927:46; Murphy 1826/28; Winch 2002:67).

On this particular July day in 1808, Stephen Allen is setting out into the city on another long walk. Normally, he would adopt a brisk, purposeful stride and follow the most direct route to his destination. Today, though, as a peregrinator, his gait will be slightly tentative and his route more meandering than usual. Rather than visiting counting houses, workshops, ships, or wharves, Allen has become a pilgrim of sorts—tracing a trail of memories. What follows below is an itinerary of his walk. We will accompany him as he visits a number of places that hold memories from his childhood before and during the Revolutionary War. Linked together, the places form what Casey might call a concatenation: a series of entities dependent upon one another for their final form. Using Maverick's 1808 *Plan of the City of New York* as a base map, I will locate sites from Stephen Allen's past and enter them onto the map, thus tracing the route of his peregrination (Fig. 17.4).

A. FIRST MORAVIAN CHURCH OF NEW YORK CITY AND GOD'S ACRE: South side of Fulton St. (then Fair Street) between Dutch and William Streets

My memory of occurrences and events only carries me back to the time when I was five or six years old or thereabouts. When about this age I was much in company of my grandmother, who was then blind and infirm. I performed many small services for her, and usually led her to the Moravian Church on Sundays, where she was a regular attendant (Allen 1927:3).

This is Stephen Allen's first stop—the scene of some of his earliest memories. I imagine him pausing here on Fair Street, in front of the First Moravian Church of New York City. It is a small frame building, constructed in 1752 and very plain in its appearance. Throughout his childhood this building was at the center of his family's existence. In addition to his grandmother, Cornelia Allen, both of his parents and his stepfather were Moravians (or “the Brethren,” as they called themselves), as well as his aunts and uncles and first cousins. It was here that Stephen was baptized, attended services, married his first wife, and baptized his first child (Moravian Church of New York City, 1744–1890).

In July of 1808, Fair Street is bustling in the summer heat but all is peaceful and quiet in the shaded burying ground behind the church. Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Moravians call their graveyards “God's Acre” and bury their dead in a pattern that reflects the organization of their congregation and their belief in “the equality of all in Christ.” There are no family plots. The Moravian “choir system” separates the congregation into specific social groupings in death as in life. Each individual



Fig. 17.4 Route of Stephen Allen’s Peregrination: Places and Memories ca. 1773 to 1808. (1808 *Plan of the city of New York*, by Peter Maverick.) (Library of Congress). (1) Sail Loft and Sail Duck Store, 180 Front Street (renumbered as 186 in 1819). (2) Residence, 211 Water Street. (a) First Moravian Church of New York City, God’s Acre, Fair (Fulton) Street, between Dutch and William Streets. (b) Residence of John and Hannah Giles, Warren Street (address unknown). (c) Site of Liberty Pole Disturbances, The Fields/The Common (City Hall Park). (d) Shelling of the City by *HMS Rose* and *HMS Phoenix*, Hudson River Shoreline. (e) Residence of James Leonard, Beekman Street near the corner of Cliff Street. (f) Royal Navy Shipyards, foot of Dover Street. (g) Livingston’s Sugar-House, British Prison, Liberty Street near the corner of Nassau Street. (h) Friends Meeting House, British Prison Hospital, Liberty Street near the corner of Broadway. (i) Washington’s Return to New York City, corner of Broad Street and Pearl Street

is assigned a slot according to his or her age, gender, and marital status. Thus married women are buried next to other married women, widows next to other widows, married men with other married men, children alongside other children—each one buried in

the order in which they died, a practice the Moravians term “the next open grave” (Spaugh 1999:17).

Allen, because he has become a member of the Presbyterian Church, will not be joining his relatives in God’s Acre. Nor will his mother, Sabina, and her second husband, Philip Sykes. Although both had been devout Moravians throughout their adult lives, they were “disowned” by the church in 1803, for “unfaithfulness and falsehood.” The church’s records make no mention of what the two might have done to deserve this punishment. According to the records, very few other members of the congregation have suffered this fate. I am assuming that since this occurred, Allen has not returned to the Fair Street Church or to God’s Acre. I imagine that today he gazes down upon his loved ones’ graves with a mixture of emotions (Moravian Church of New York City, 1744–1890; Stocker 1922:84).

The New York City Moravian Church records and Harry Emilius Stocker’s (1922) history of the local church provide a perspective on Allen’s family life that is largely missing from his own memoirs. Using the entries of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and miscellaneous comments, I have reconstructed the relationships among the members of his extended family and now have a better understanding of the closely knit community of faith that raised and educated him. By tracing the extended family’s growing involvement in the Moravian Church—as the children found their places in the Moravian choir system, as adults married other Moravians and baptized their own children at the Fair Street church—I now suspect that Moravian teachings and theology played an important part in Allen’s upbringing and may also have contributed to his later political and moral beliefs (Moravian Church of New York City, 1744–1890).

The Moravian Church was at the forefront of the Great Awakening (1739–1745), an era in America’s history described by Patricia Bonomi (1986:131) as an “intense period of revivalist tumult.” In 1727, shiploads of Moravians set sail from Germany bound for the New World. They had great plans for British North America where they hoped to minister to Native Americans, enslaved Africans, and German immigrants. The latter, the Moravians believed, had been largely abandoned by the Lutheran Church hierarchy in Europe. Upon their arrival they established closed religious communities in Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania that became bases of operation for an army of itinerant preachers, as well as a number of highly successful missions among Native Americans. Unfortunately, within a decade, they had also become one of America’s most vilified and persecuted denominations. In New York City, the Moravians’ troubles began soon after they organized their first Society here in 1741 (Fogelman 2007:156–220, Stocker 1922:41).

Many of the Moravians’ beliefs were indistinguishable from those of other radical religious groups active in Europe and America. However, the Moravians—with their feminized and Christ-centered notion of the Trinity, their so-called “Litany of the Wounds” stressing the blood and wounds of the crucified Christ, their racially integrated congregations, their inclusion of women in high level leadership roles, and unusual worship practices such as foot-washings and “love feasts”—would certainly rank as one of the more extreme evangelical sects operating on American soil. But what truly seemed to be the source of their problems, at least in New York City,

was the threat that they posed to established religious hierarchies, especially those of the Lutheran and Dutch Reformed Churches (Atwood 2004; Fogelman 2007:73–130; Peucker 2007:1–4; Stocker 1922:53–55).

The anti-Moravian backlash that occurred in New York City during the 1740s and 50s may have been provoked by the Brethren's 1742 decision to initiate an intensive program of local evangelizing to "the mixed multitude sadly in need of gospel ministrations." (Stocker 1922:51). In 1744, the Colony of New York banished Moravian missionaries from its borders, labeling them as "Suspicious, Vagrant, Strolling Preachers... [suspected of] Creating Disturbances & Occasioning Revolts among His Majesties Subjects" (Fogelman 2007:162). This occurred at the outset of King George's War (1744–1748), fought by the British against the French and their Native American allies. Moravians aroused intense suspicion during this conflict as "unnaturalized, uninvited, pacifist Germans" who ministered to numerous tribal groups residing along the frontier. The Moravians' work among free and enslaved Africans raised additional suspicions. A report made to the governor in 1746 even suggested a link between the Moravians and the city's so-called slave conspiracy of 1741 (Fogelman 2004:162–163). The Moravians' aggressive evangelizing coupled with their outright dismissal of institutional and theological boundaries earned them many enemies. According to Stocker (1922:55), the people of New York had become so "prejudiced" against the Moravians that "it was unsafe for the Brethren and their friends to be seen in the streets of the city." There were reports of stonings.

In this environment, in 1748, a handful of Society members organized New York City's first Moravian congregation. In the beginning, fifty men, women, and children gathered together at a rented hall. In 1752, they erected the church on Fair Street (Stocker 1922:34–48). Allen's family is documented as having been active from the very start. Cornelia Allen's name appears in a 1754 membership list, along with her daughters, Hannah Allen, Mary Allen, and Catherine Allen (Stocker 1922:82–83; 116). As the years passed, the intense hostility against the Moravians began to subside somewhat. By the time Stephen Allen was baptized in the Moravian Church in 1767, the Moravians seemed to have established genuinely peaceful relations with the city's other Protestant churches (1922:111). Increasingly, more secular conflicts captured the public's attention. Most of these involved the deteriorating relationship between the colonists and the British authorities (Bonami 1986:202).

I have yet to discover what was said in the sermons preached at the Fair Street church, or the contents of the lessons presented to Stephen and his cousins at the weekly Children's Meetings. With such information, I might be able to provide a better explanation as to why Moravians such as Stephen's aunt and uncle, John and Hannah Giles, embraced the Revolutionary cause so readily. Nonetheless, Nash's (1986:247) observation that The Great Awakening represented "a shattering of the habit of obedience," seems to hold true for many of members of New York City's Moravian congregation. As members of a group that experienced itself as persecuted by those in authority, New York's Moravians would have found the notions of liberty and of freedom from tyranny especially appealing. Moreover, as oath-refusers and pacifists, many Moravians had grown accustomed to standing by their principles. Stocker (1922:99), for example, recounts instances where members of the congregation

sought redress from local authorities after being arrested for refusing to perform militia duty. As explained by Bonomi (1986:153), such actions against authority taken during the Great Awakening,

“...provided a kind of ‘practice model’ which enabled the provincials to ‘rehearse’—though unwittingly—a number of the situations and arguments appropriate to them that would reappear with the political crisis of the 1760s and 1770s.”

Possibly, because the congregation was so small and the members so close, these events were experienced more personally and thus more intensely.

The history of New York City’s First Moravian Church suggests that Stephen Allen’s early experience of “Moravian-ness” had a role in forming his later personal, religious, and political beliefs. Certainly, memories of the church and of his family of origin (and perhaps even some ideas regarding the rights of free citizens) would have been intertwined. This alone would bring him to a halt on Fair Street, by God’s Acre, on a July day in 1808.

B. RESIDENCE OF JOHN AND HANNAH GILES: Warren Street, exact address unknown

C. THE COMMON, SITE OF THE LIBERTY POLE DISTURBANCES: Present day City Hall Park

This uncle of mine, though an Englishman by birth, was a true Whig, a friend to the rights of man and the liberties of America. He took great pleasure in unfolding to my infant mind the principles contended for by the Colonies. This he endeavored to effect in several ways. If any transaction of a public nature, such as a meeting of the citizens on political subjects took place...he would take me by the hand and lead me to the scene of the actions and there endeavor to make me understand the cause and purport of the occurrence (Allen 1927:6).

I imagine Stephen continuing up the hill on Fair Street. He heads uptown on Broadway. His objective is Warren Street, where he lived as a child with his Aunt Hannah, one of his late father’s sisters, and her husband James. Allen has just visited their graves in God’s Acre and perhaps is still thinking of them.

Following her husband’s death in 1769, Sabina sent Allen here to be cared for by her in-laws. At the time, the household probably also included the Giles’ two children, Cornelia, who was one year younger than Stephen, and a son, Israel, from Hannah’s first marriage, who was 11 years older. Stephen was a small boy when he first came here, possibly as young as three or four years old (Moravian Church of New York City, 1744–1890). Warren Street, which runs between Greenwich and Broadway, cuts through a poor neighborhood. A contemporary painting by the Baroness Hyde de Neuville shows it lined with small frame houses that are the homes and workshops of artisans (Gilje 1987:Plate 6). At the eastern end of Warren Street are Broadway and the grim edifices of the city jail and almshouse, which faced to the south, onto a large open area known as the Common. For generations the Common has been where New Yorkers gathered for celebrations or to air their grievances (See LaRoche Chap. 9). A portion of it is about to become the seat of the city’s government, as soon as the elegant new City Hall—now under construction—is completed (National Register of Historic Places, NPS).

Many of the childhood memories recorded in Allen's memoirs occurred while he lived with the Giles family—a time coinciding with one of the most tumultuous periods in the city's history. In the years immediately preceding the American Revolution, urban resistance to restrictions imposed by British imperial measures (the Tea Act of 1773, the Intolerable Acts of 1774) and reaction to more local concerns (labor conflict resulting from moonlighting by off-duty British soldiers, impressment of American sailors) ranged from political debate to plebian mob actions loosely controlled by more radical Whigs who were often laboring people themselves (Gilje 1987:37–68; Nash 1986:200–247). For Stephen Allen, being a child in New York City on the eve of the American Revolution and during its opening days, meant witnessing public disorder on the city streets, as well as having its underlying causes explained to him. Hannah and James Giles emerge in Allen's memoirs as people devoted to the cause of American independence. James was also a former schoolteacher, and apparently a very good one. The city would become Allen's classroom.

James Giles was the adult most responsible for instilling in Stephen a love of learning. Although Allen would never receive much formal schooling as a child, he developed a lifelong passion for reading and for books. His uncle's favorite reading material were books and articles "which treated of the great question at issue between this country and Great Britain." Giles, Allen tells us, "was much delighted with the writings of Thomas Paine." His uncle frequently instructed Stephen to read to him from Paine's first installment of "The American Crisis" written in 1776 (Allen 1927:6). Beginning with the famous words: "These are the times that try men's souls," the essay so impressed George Washington that he ordered it read to the troops on Christmas Eve, 1776, as they prepared to cross the Delaware River on their way to the Battle of Trenton (Nelson 2006:108). Allen remembered being quite moved by his uncle's explanations of Paine's ideas.

As they made their way through the city's street, James Giles and his young nephew witnessed scenes that would seem extraordinary to the twenty-first-century eye—effigy processions, bonfires, and the occasional all-out riot. What we would today call "street theater" was a common occurrence in eighteenth-century New York City. As Gilje (1987:39) observes, this was "an era when public spectacle still carried greater impact than the written word." Beginning in the 1760s, New Yorkers began to direct traditional forms of crowd rituals against the British government that ruled them. The Liberty Pole disturbances are among the best known. They began during celebrations held for the repeal of Stamp Act in 1766 and would continue for another 10 years. The pole was intended to be "a monument to liberty and freedom" and was erected on the city's Common, also known as "the Fields," within what is today's City Hall Park. With symbolic roots reaching back to antiquity, the pole itself was a tall pine mast topped with a flagstaff. Nailed onto the flagstaff was a wooden board inscribed with the words "George 3rd, Pitt—and Liberty." Other items were added as time went by, including a golden weathervane bearing the word "Liberty," a liberty cap, and a flag with the cross of St. George (Fischer 2004:41; Stokes 1929 [IV]:805).

James Giles took Allen to see the liberty pole “and explained the object and intention of it” (Allen 1927:6). This liberty pole was probably the fifth and last pole—each of its predecessors having been destroyed by British soldiers. The Sons of Liberty, the organization leading local resistance efforts in the city, erected it on February 6, 1770. A great celebration was held to mark its installation, attended by thousands (Stokes 1929 [IV]:805–806). The pole’s designers had gone to great lengths to ensure this pole’s survival, reinforcing it with protective bands of iron bars and hoops down its entire length, placing it in a 12 foot deep hole, and further securing it with layers of stone, dirt, and timber. Allen (1927:6) remembered the pole being about 50 ft high, and topped by a liberty cap “emblematic of the principles for which the people were even then contending.” He adds that it “was intended for a rallying point for the friends of liberty, in the event of their being attacked by the Mercenary soldiers of the King.” Following the capture of New York, on October 28, 1776, the British were finally able to remove the pole (Stokes 1929 [IV]:805–806).

Mingled with memories of the Giles home on Warren Street is a much sadder scene—the last glimpse of his older brother John, as he marched off to fight in the Revolutionary War. In the memoirs, Allen (1927:12) recalls seeing John as he came down Warren Street with the other soldiers “fully equipped for service.” The troops came to a halt in front of the Giles house. At that point Sabina Allen rushed out, pulled her son aside, and pleaded with him “to tarry and let the troops pass on without him.” As reported by Allen, “this he utterly refused, considering it both cowardly and dishonorable to desert the standard of his country at the time of need.” The family never saw him again. Allen assumed that his brother “fell in battle fighting for the liberties of his country in some of the northern expeditions during the first or second campaign of our army on the Canadian frontier.” John Allen was only 17 years old. Half a century later, writing about the event in his memoirs, Allen says, “I recollect it perfectly,” suggesting that this memory remained particularly painful.

D. SHELLING OF THE CITY BY THE *ROSE* AND THE *PHOENIX*: Hudson River shoreline north of Trinity Church

This is a true picture of what occurred without any degree of coloring whatsoever (Allen 1927:10).

Traveling west again, from City Hall Park, Stephen comes to the Hudson River waterfront where he stops and gazes south, over Rhinelander’s Dock, towards the upper reaches of New York Bay. Caught up in his memories of New York on the eve of the Revolution, his thoughts turn to the year that the fighting began near Boston.

It was 1775, well over a year before the opening days of the British invasion of the city, but the Royal Navy kept New York’s inhabitants in a constant state of terror. The very presence of British ships docked in the East River or anchored in the Bay served as a daily reminder to the citizenry that Great Britain, with its naval superiority, could easily crush the city when the time came (McCullough 2005:119). For the young Stephen Allen, two naval warships in particular would figure in his life—the *HMS Rose* and the *HMS Phoenix*.

Although New York had received word in April 1775 of the victories at Concord and Lexington, it remained a divided city with a large loyalist population and British soldiers garrisoned in its midst. Commerce with the British was ongoing, although highly controversial. Provisioning the British ships was an activity that could potentially lead to rioting. In July 1775, a crowd burned one of the barges that supplied the *HMS Asia*, a 64-gun warship large enough to carry 500 men (McCullough 2005:119; Pickman 1999:6). When the city offered to build a replacement barge, “disorderly and evil-disposed” persons broke into the shipyard and sawed it to pieces (Bliven 1972:32–33; Gilje 1987:63). That August, the *Asia* inadvertently set off a mass exodus from the city when it shelled the Battery as a warning to a group of colonists who were attempting to strip the royal ramparts of its cannons. It was 3 AM, however, and the terrible blasts lit the night sky and shook the entire city awake. A number of buildings were damaged and several people wounded. For many New Yorkers, it was a preview of things to come. Within a month about one-third of the population had left the city (Bliven 1972:37; Schechter 2002:63–64).

The British fleet began to mass in New York’s Lower Bay during the spring and summer of 1776. By June 30th, nearly the entire fleet was visible from the city’s rooftops. Needless to say, everyone was on edge. Washington and his army had arrived earlier that spring. On July 9th—mindful of the firepower floating just offshore—New York’s Provincial Assembly voted to declare New York a state and approve the Declaration of Independence. The following day, a crowd composed of soldiers from the Continental Army and local citizens marched down Broadway to Bowling Green and toppled the statue of George III. The British, in response, presented a terrifying display of their naval abilities to the rebellious New Yorkers. On the afternoon of July 12th, the *Phoenix* and the *Rose*, with 72 guns combined, along with three tenders, were dispatched from their mooring places off Staten Island and headed across the bay towards the city. Sailing up the Hudson with Manhattan Island to their east, the ships reportedly began firing broadsides as soon as they had progressed as far upstream as Trinity Church at Wall Street. They continued firing as they moved up the river, striking targets along the way. Although batteries were blazing on both the Manhattan and New Jersey sides of the river, the ships were moving too quickly and were too distant from either shoreline to be hit. There was considerable property damage, some injuries, but the only fatalities were six allegedly drunken members of a local artillery crew who blew themselves up with their own cannon (McCullough 2005:138–139; Schechter 2002:99, 102; 104; Stokes 1929 [V]:994).

Those who hadn’t left when the *Asia* fired upon the city in 1775 began to consider it now. Allen, who had just turned nine when the event occurred, recalled the day in his memoirs (Allen 1927:9–10). The shelling, he tells us, frightened people “most unmercilessly” [sic.]. He and his Aunt Hannah fled north beyond the limits of the city. They found a secure spot behind some hills, south of present day Canal Street. Written with characteristic wit, clear memory, and eye for detail, Allen (1927:9–10) describes the scene:

Here you might see a mother with a child on one arm or two urchins hanging to her skirts. There an old man with a small trunk under his arm, which no doubt contained his treasure, the hard earnings of many years, and which he valued far above to him imaginary liberties

of his country. Scarce a word was heard from the whole group while the guns were roaring, but no sooner had they ceased than all tongues were going, some lamenting the folly of those who were opposing the Govt. of the Mother-Country, while others were rejoicing that the danger was over and they permitted to return to their habitation.

Stephen Allen and his family fled the city for Long Island that August, as the British moved to seize the city. They returned the day after the great fire of September 20th to 21st that destroyed nearly a quarter of the city's buildings. The city was now in British hands and it was widely believed that the fire was intentional. Both sides blamed the other and the cause was never determined (Allen 1927:13, 15; Stokes 1929[V]:1020).

E. RESIDENCE OF JAMES LEONARD: Beekman Street near the corner of Cliff Street

F. ROYAL NAVY SHIPYARDS: Near the foot of Dover Street, present day site of the Brooklyn Bridge

My second oldest brother William was at this time an apprentice to James Leonard, learning the business of a sail maker. Mr. Leonard was a decided and undeviating Loyalist...He therefore did not remove his family but remained at his house in town, having nothing to fear from the British authorities to whose cause he was a friend. To his house my mother took me... (Allen 1927:15).

Momentarily overwhelmed by memories of those seemingly endless years when the redcoats controlled the city, Allen is drawn back to the other river—the East River—besides which he would live for most of the occupation. Walking back across the island, he crosses quickly across the Common and then follows Beekman Street down the hill. Suddenly he spots the handsome brick house where he spent so many days as a young sail maker's apprentice. He peers over the fence hoping he can catch a glimpse of the backyard through the alleyway. No luck.

It was during his apprenticeship to James Leonard, while the British-occupied New York City (1776–1783), that Stephen Allen passed some of the bleakest days of his youth. Although Leonard had become extremely successful as a result of his Tory connections, he seems not to have been very generous towards the boys who served as his apprentices. Allen recalled that “we were neither well-clothed, well fed, nor well-lodged” (Allen 1927:21). Although only nine at the time his apprenticeship began, the terms agreed upon by his mother called for him to remain with Leonard until he was 21 years old.

The house on Beekman Street was the second residence occupied by the Leonard family during the Allen brothers' apprenticeship. In relocating here, the newly prosperous Leonard had obtained a more “genteel” and “commodious” residence for himself and his family (Allen 1927:22). In 1783, when the house was advertised for sale (the Leonards, as Loyalists, were forced to leave the city for Nova Scotia at the end of the Revolutionary War), it was described as “an excellent Brick House” containing “five rooms with fireplaces in each.” Behind the house was “a pleasant garden, with an excellent kitchen, and a very good oven that would suit a baker, as there is a pump” (*New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury*, 7/28/1783:1).

Initially, the apprentices lodged in a garret at the Leonard family's previous home (location unknown). When they moved to Beekman Street, the family decided there was no longer space for the boys and sent them to sleep in the sail loft. Although its

exact location is unknown, the memoirs indicate that it faced the East River docks (Allen 1927:22, 33). As chronicled by Gilje (2004), this was at the heart of the waterfront district and the scene of drunkenness, prostitution, rioting, brawling and all the mayhem associated with sailors at liberty ashore—hardly a place for young boys to spend their nights. Each day the apprentices walked from the sail loft to the Beekman Street house, where they took their meager meals. Breakfast and dinner (the noonday meal) were eaten in the house's "cellar story." Dinner often consisted of leftover stew that became "sour from age and fermentation" by the end of the week. Supper, which was bread and butter, was served outside in the yard, regardless of the season or the weather. The boys tended to eat this on the streets as they returned to the sail loft every evening. It was the responsibility of the master to provide much (although not all) of the apprentices' clothing. Allen recalled: "so utterly neglected had we been, that with the clothes that we possessed... we were unfit to appear at church or in decent company." The Allen boys and the other apprentices wore their shoes until they "were literally barefoot" (Allen 1927:22, 29).

Allen's widowed mother, Sabina, married her second husband, shoemaker Philip Sykes, in 1780 (Moravian Church of New York City, 1744–1890). Bolstered by her newfound economic security, Sabina obtained a commitment from Leonard to improve her sons' harsh living conditions. Allen records that at last the boys were fed and dressed decently. Best of all, they no longer had to sleep in the sail loft, a situation their mother found particularly distressing. The Leonards agreed to provide a small room in the Beekman Street house for William. Stephen was now allowed to sleep at his mother's. On Saturday nights, both boys were to stay with Sabina and Philip, so that they could observe the Sabbath and attend services at the Moravian church on Sundays (Allen 1927:29–30).

There were limits, however, to Sabina's ability to protect her sons in British-occupied New York. One constant threat was the local press gangs that roamed the waterfront, seizing American men and boys for service aboard British ships of war (Gilje 2004:104). Once pressed into service, an individual ran the risk of disappearing for years, if not forever. Even boys Stephen's age were considered fair game. As a sail maker's apprentice, Stephen was particularly vulnerable to impressments. According to Allen (1927:23), the apprentices' garb of canvas trousers and a short jacket made them appear to be young sailors on leave, the preferred prey of press gangs. Additionally, because Allen was becoming a favorite of Leonard's, he may have been dispatched on his own to the Royal Navy Shipyards in the vicinity of Roosevelt and Dover Streets (site of the present day approach ramps to the Brooklyn Bridge) in order to repair or install sails (Allen 1927:34; Morrison 1909:16–17). Traveling back and forth between the sail loft and the shipyards, Stephen would have frequently found himself on the waterfront and thus potentially in the path of a press gang.

Although Leonard was well connected with British naval officials, he clearly could not guarantee the safety of Allen and the other apprentices. In fact, Allen (1927:23) recalls being rescued by his mother during one particularly harrowing episode.

...it several times happened that we were taken up and kept in confinement during the night, until Mr. Leonard came forward to claim us in the morning. I recollect one instance when I was chased by one of these gangs, and followed by one of the sailors composing it into the bedroom of my mother, and did not relinquish his pursuit until, he saw, if he took one, he must take both of us.

Impressment was perhaps the most radicalizing experience that befell the waterfront's residents. Gilje explains that the concept of "liberty" had many meanings for the American colonists. For sailors, being "pressed" into service by the British represented an immediate experience of losing one's personal freedom, i.e., liberty. In the port cities of North America, the reaction to this phenomenon took political form in anti-impressment rioting. "The American Revolution," concludes Gilje (2004:99), "began on the waterfront." Conflating liberty from the British Navy with liberty from the British government fueled the political convictions of many in the waterfront community. Allen was no exception. Looking back many years later, he expressed this clearly:

I was about this time in my 14th year, and these outrages upon our liberty had a strong tendency to increase my predilections in favor of the cause in which my Country was engaged. They had in fact increased with my years and the same principles and feelings were imbibed by my brother William. We were denounced therefore by the other boys as rebels. Nevertheless we adhered to our principles... (Allen 1927:23–24).

As a result of his mother's intervention, the Leonard family treated Allen with "more kindness and attention." Allen's feelings towards them had also softened considerably. He excelled as a sail maker to the point where James Leonard bragged to his brothers (also sail makers) about Allen's talents and productivity. Stephen was rewarded with increased responsibility. In 1783, towards the close of the war, when James Leonard traveled to Nova Scotia to make arrangements for his family's imminent departure, he left Allen in charge of his business. Members of the Leonard family pleaded with the 15-year old Allen to accompany them in their exile. According to the memoirs, Stephen explained that he would never abandon his mother and further that "I was and always had been in principle a Whig and felt glad about the change about to be affected" (Allen 1927:34).

In one year, an estimated 29,000 Loyalists left New York for Nova Scotia (Schechter 2002:374). Remarking on the fate of the family that he had known for nearly eight years, Allen (1927:34) wrote "they all set sail for their new abode, where the greater part of them after experiencing many hardships and deprivations laid their bones." As a witness to the "barbarous cruelties" inflicted upon American prisoners of war by the British and their supporters, Allen (1927:32) claimed to despise the British monarch, George III, and also "those who adhered to his cause." Perhaps over time, as he matured and looked back upon his years as an apprentice, Allen would come to feel some degree of compassion for the loyalist Leonard family.

G. LIVINGTON'S SUGAR-HOUSE, BRITISH PRISON: Liberty Street (then Crown Street)

H. FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, BRITISH PRISON HOSPITAL: also on Liberty Street

In this unadorned relation of facts I confine myself chiefly, and nearly altogether, to occurrences which came under my own observation and which have impressed themselves upon my memory in a manner never to be forgotten. The barbarian cruelty of the British toward the American prisoners, whom they uniformly termed rebels, is without parallel (Allen 1927:20)

Leaving Beekman Street and the waterfront behind him, Stephen heads down Pearl Street, turns right onto Maiden Lane and then bears left at the fork where Liberty Street begins. He hasn't walked very far before seeing it—the old Livingston Sugar-House, a dark and massive stone building that radiates a nearly unbearable aura of gloom (Dandridge 1911:129). Even now, years later, he can still smell the foul odor of death seeping through the windows.

Having seized New York City and its harbor in the fall of 1776, the British set about making the city their wartime headquarters. As such, New York also became the primary dumping ground for prisoners of war. Edwin G. Burrows (2008:200) estimates that beginning with the thousands of American soldiers captured during the initial invasion of New York, the British eventually imprisoned between 24,850 and 32,000 men and boys in the city and its immediate environs, housing them in sugar-houses, public buildings, churches, and prison ships. Of these prisoners, he also estimates that between 15,575 and 18,000 may have died of disease or starvation. Assuming that 35,800 patriot soldiers died during the Revolutionary War, these numbers suggest that half of these deaths occurred among those who were imprisoned in New York City (Burrows 2008:201).

Conditions in all of the prisons were horrific. Worst of all, however, were the conditions at two sugar refineries that had been converted into prisons: Van Cortlandt's Sugar-House at the northwest corner of Trinity churchyard and Livingston's Sugar-House on Liberty Street (Burrows 2008:23–24, 271). Allen (1927:18) remembered these two prisons as “large structures, three or four stories high, badly ventilated and worse lighted.” It was said that men suffered so horribly at the sugar-houses that they ate the flesh off their own arms to avoid starvation. One man died after trying to eat a brick (Burrows 2008:58). Another account states that every day “at least a dozen corpses were dragged out” from Livingston's “and pitched like dead dogs into the ditches and morasses beyond the city” (Dandridge 1911:26–27).

During the British occupation, Stephen Allen became familiar with conditions at Livingston's as a result of accompanying Hannah Giles as she delivered “messes of soup” to the prisoners there. In his memoirs, Allen (1927:18) recalled that both she and his uncle James “embraced every opportunity that occurred to relieve the distress of those...made prisoners by the English and confined within the boundaries of the city.” The two were most likely motivated by a combination of their political beliefs and their strong religious faith as Moravians. Looking back years later in his memoirs, Allen (1927:19) recalled the “the stench” and the prisoners calling for help from the windows “declaring that they were starving.”

Allen (1927:20) also remembered the many churches destroyed by the British during use as prison hospitals. The soldiers gutted the interiors and used the contents for “every indignity which the savage mind of our invaders could invent.”

At the hospitals, he recalled, “fifty or sixty died daily. Their bodies were removed by cartload every morning.” Specifically, he remembered the Friends Meeting House on Liberty Street, up the block from Livingston’s. Here, he saw dead bodies lying in the yard, “waiting for the cart to convey them to their last home.”

I. WASHINGTON’S SPEECH TO THE CITIZENS UPON HIS RETURN TO NEW YORK CITY AT THE END OF THE WAR: Broad Street near the corner of Pearl Street

This was a happy day for the real friends of America, and it was celebrated accordingly by old and young, particularly by those who had left the city at the commencement of the troubles and had now returned for the first time *from an exile of eight long years* (Allen 1927:35).

From Liberty Street, Allen makes his way down Broadway, cuts briefly down Wall Street to Broad Street, where he finds himself standing in front of Fraunces Tavern.

The last battle of the Revolutionary War—the Battle of Yorktown, fought in Virginia in 1781—ended with a decisive American victory. Peace, however, did not come to New York City until September 1783, following the signing of the Treaty of Paris. It would be another 2 months until the Americans could regain the city. Following terms drawn up by the British Commander-in-Chief, American troops finally reclaimed New York City, at noon, on November 25, 1783. Their entry was precisely timed to coincide with the departure of the last of the British troops (Schechter 2002:360–375).

Accompanied by war-weary soldiers and cheering citizens, Washington proceeded down the Bowery and into the city. Contemporary accounts suggest that the procession followed a route that took them down Pearl Street, where they turned west on Wall Street. At the charred remains of Trinity Church (destroyed in the 1776 fire and not as yet rebuilt), they traveled one block north on Broadway. Here, Washington, Governor Clinton, and other officials “alighted” at Cape’s Tavern, located at the intersection with Thames Street. The rest of the group, consisting of civilians and a detail of infantry and artillery, proceeded to the Battery where they planned to hoist the American flag with its 13 stripes. Upon arriving, they discovered that the British had greased the flagpole in one final petty act of sabotage. After a short delay, a young sailor named John Van Arsdale was able to fashion a pair of cleats for himself and climb the pole. With more cheering and a 13-gun salute, the American flag finally waved over Fort George (Stokes 1929 [V]:1173–1175).

Allen, who was then 16 years old, recalled the day, noting that he “partook of the general spirit of hilarity.” He may have joined with the crowds escorting Washington down the Bowery and into the city, but he doesn’t mention this. That night, Washington and his officers attended a public dinner at Fraunces Tavern, hosted by Governor Clinton (Stokes 1929 [V]:1173). Perhaps Allen was among those trailing along after Washington, as he headed to the tavern, located at the intersection of Broad and Pearl Streets. In his memoir, Allen (1927:35) tells us that he “followed the American troops, with Washington at their head, to his quarters on Broad Street, where he addressed the citizens in his usual style of elegance.”



Fig. 17.5 As seen in this 1795 “Certificate of Membership for the Society of Master Sail-Makers of the City of New York,” artisans such as Stephen Allen used images of the waterfront and its workplaces, along with symbolic references to “the spirit of 76,” to express their professional identities (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society)

Stephen, the peregrinator of 1808, having arrived at the corner of Pearl and Broad, pauses and remembers how on a November evening in 1783, he stood with a crowd of exhausted but exuberant New Yorkers outside the Tavern. Although chilled and tired, he did not want the celebrations to end (Fig. 17.5).

Conclusion

For Hayden (1997:9), urban landscapes are “storehouses” for memories. Implied in this is the idea that in their daily rounds, urban dwellers move through “densely gathered landscapes” composed of events and experiences bound to places. Lower Manhattan in 1808 would have offered Allen such a “concatenation of places.” Clearly, I wouldn’t expect Allen to follow the route of his July peregrination repeatedly for the rest of his life. He might, however, continue to encounter portions of it as he traveled throughout the city. For instance, imagine Allen in 1821 as the newly appointed mayor of the city, settling into his office and looking out at City Hall Park. Might he not remember the liberty pole and the lessons taught to him by his uncle? Imagine Allen walking down Liberty Street on his way to a monthly board meeting and passing the old Livingston Sugar-House, still standing at the time he composed his memoirs. Might he not remember helping his aunt and uncle feed the

starving prisoners? Imagine Allen on his way to catch the Brooklyn Ferry at Beekman Slip. Might he not remember the press gangs that once roamed the waterfront, the fear he felt of being carried off forever, and how his mother rescued him.

Stephen Allen's memories had enough of a hold over him so that he would begin writing them down as memoirs following his retirement from business at the age of 59. At that time, the events and the emotions of half a century ago were sufficiently vivid in his mind that he would still describe the British as "a remorseless and savage foe." Adding to the power of these memories is the fact that Stephen was so young when the events occurred. As Tuan (1977:185–186) has noted, "the child knows the world more sensuously than the adult... to the extent that a small child's time is not that of an older person, neither is his experience of place." Indeed, Stephen Allen's memoirs are at their most engaging when he is writing of events he experienced as a child during and immediately before the American Revolution. These were affixed to their geographic locations during a childhood that coincided not only with historic events but also with a time when men and women seized upon certain ideas regarding liberty and freedom and acted upon them. Linguistic echoes of these ideas are scattered throughout Allen's memoirs and found in such phrases as "fundamental and immutable principals," "outrages upon our liberty," "friends of equal rights," and "stimulating the citizens to resistance." I suggest that for the rest of his life, Allen's memories of his Revolutionary War childhood, and the emotions associated with it, remained available to him on the city's streets.

Before ending my account of Stephen Allen's life and of his peregrination, I return briefly to the corner of Broad and Pearl on that July afternoon in 1808, where Allen remains standing in the street, in front of the Fraunces Tavern. His thoughts have now turned to his wife who is about to give birth at the crowded house at 211 Water Street—a house already filled with children, both small and nearly grown. He will stop there, he decides, in the early evening so he can see them all before bedtime. But for now there's work to be done. Back at the loft are piles of half-completed orders and apprentices and journeymen who must be given their instructions. By this hour, several ship's captains, assorted cartmen, and perhaps a fellow sail maker or two, will be waiting by the door. And when the workday is finally over there is a meeting scheduled for tonight at the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. He is their president and must attend.

But somehow he can't quite bring himself to leave this spot just yet. He wants to stay a moment or two longer so he can continue his musings about the November evening in 1783 when he was there to greet Washington and the troops upon their return to New York City. He was only 16 years old and had just ended his apprenticeship with James Leonard, who along with his family had sailed off that October on a sad journey to Nova Scotia. This was the year he had become an adult—"turned loose upon the world to seek my fortune, with nothing to commence but a good constitution and a scanty wardrobe" (Allen 1927:37). Now here he is, 41 years old, grateful for all that he has accomplished so far in life. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a wrinkled piece of paper, and unfolds it in his hands. Scribbled upon it are the words: "Small and steady gains give competency with tranquility of mind."

When he has finished reading, he reflects for a few moments upon the wisdom of this advice. Then he turns and starts walking towards the waterfront, back to the sail loft on Front Street. There he will work a few hours before heading home.

Acknowledgments Stephen Allen's long life extended into two centuries and spanned several phases of New York City's social and political history. So perhaps it's only fitting that gathering the facts of his life has spanned three decades and several phases of my own life. In the process of writing Allen's life story, I came to appreciate how many of the people I first worked with doing archaeology in Lower Manhattan during the late 1970s and early 80s remain my friends and colleagues. In fact, over the years, a number of them contributed in various ways to the completion of this paper. For this, I wish to thank Anne-Marie Cantwell, Michael Devonshire, Jed Levin, Kate Tarlow Morgan, Arnold Pickman, Marie-Lorraine Pipes, Nan Rothschild, and Diana Wall. I am also indebted to Thomas Bender who initially directed me to Allen's memoirs and whose writing has helped me understand the relationship between Allen's artisan origins and his subsequent political career. I wish to thank Daniel Pagano of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission for helping me locate reports describing archaeological work conducted in and around the South Street Seaport Historic District. I also wish to thank a more recent friend, Ken Chase, for giving me access to his extensive collection of books dealing with New York City during the Revolutionary War. I am grateful to New-York Historical Society staff members Marybeth DeFilippis, Eleanor Gillers, Tammy Kiter, Ted O'Reilly, and Jill Slight for helping me find and obtain copies of Stephen Allen-related documents. Another person I wish to thank is Colleen Iverson, Director of the New York City Marble Cemetery, where Allen was once chairman of the Board of Trustees and is interred. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Meta Janowitz and Diane Dallal, for offering me the opportunity to contribute to this book as well as for helping me shape the final draft of this paper.

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Chapter 18

Public Life, Personal Grief: The Contrasting Existence of a Nineteenth Century New York Family

Elizabeth D. Meade and Rebecca L. White

Whatever else may be said of the departure of the wise and eminently good, one thing is certain—it is intrinsically a loss to the church and a loss to the world...Hence it has ever been a mark of wisdom, and an indication of sensibility purely Christian, to bewail their exit, to weep over the tombs the tears not only of sympathy, but of reflection and principle, and genuine devotion (Reverend Doctor Samuel Hanson Cox, 1835).

In nineteenth century New York City, the heads of the city's many religious institutions were often prominent community leaders who were characterized by the contrast between their public duties and their private lives. Reverend Dr. Samuel Hanson Cox (1793–1880) was a well-known and well-liked Presbyterian minister whose abolitionist views were well known throughout New York City. However, as a result of Dr. Cox's sometimes controversial preaching and the prevalence of disease in New York during the early nineteenth century, his family was plagued by tragedy and, at times, violence. In 2006, construction workers uncovered human remains during excavation for a new development project in New York City. The site was once the home of the Spring Street Presbyterian Church—and its burial vaults—where Dr. Cox preached in the early 1820s. The mortuary artifacts that were recovered during the archaeological investigation that followed the discovery provided new information about Dr. Cox and his extended family and exposed the plight of a young family trying to stay together during a time of soaring infant and childhood mortality.

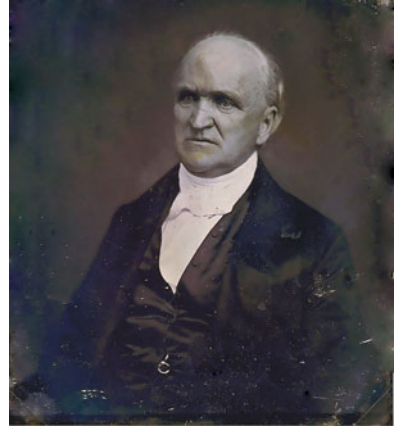
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Fig. 18.1 Daguerreotype of Samuel Hanson Cox taken by Matthew Brady circa 1844–1860. (From the collection of the Library of Congress)



The Spring Street Church site is located in the SoHo neighborhood of Manhattan in an area that is today suffocated by an urban landscape. At the turn of the nineteenth century, it was an undeveloped rural landscape marked by meadows, swamps, tall glacial sand hills, and miles of open farmland. Spring Street, then known as Brannon Street, was one of the first roads to be cut through the area as people gradually began to settle the area north of modern Canal Street during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Despite the influx of people, most houses of worship remained at inconvenient distances downtown.

The Spring Street Church was born out of the desire of local residents to be able to attend religious gatherings closer to their homes. The plot of land on which the church stood was obtained in 1807 by a small group of wealthy members of the First Presbyterian Church on Wall Street and the cornerstone was laid in 1810. The church's first pastor, the Reverend Doctor Matthew LaRue Perrine, led the congregation until 1820, at which time he was replaced by Dr. Cox, who would prove to be a dynamic and influential leader not only within the Spring Street Church, but also within all of New York City.

Dr. Samuel Hanson Cox

Dr. Samuel H. Cox was born in Philadelphia on August 25, 1793 (see Fig. 18.1). His father, a Quaker, died when Samuel was a young boy and his mother raised him in the Quaker faith in Philadelphia and New Jersey. After serving in a volunteer rifle regiment in the War of 1812, Cox turned to academics (Cox 1912). Although he originally studied law, Cox was drawn to theology and soon rejected the faith of his

parents in favor of Presbyterianism (Fowler 1856). On April 7, 1817 Cox married Abiah Hyde Cleveland. In 1820, the Spring Street Church was in need of a minister and Cox “with a young and growing family...came to New York” (Ibid.:359).

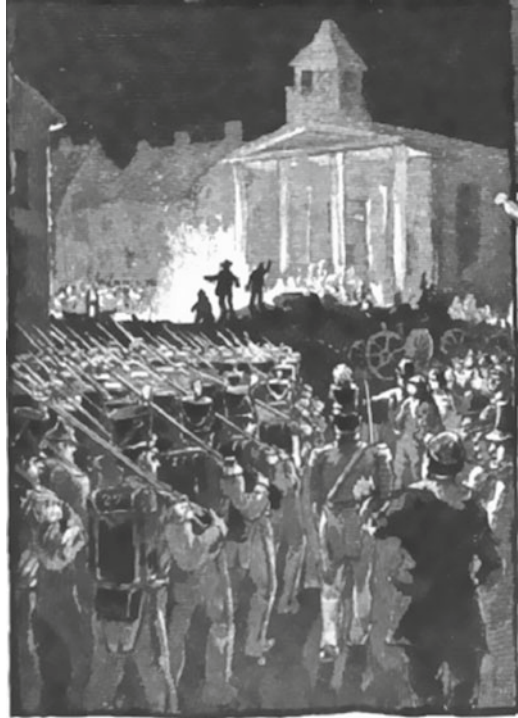
Cox was an ardent abolitionist, a trait likely instilled in him by his Quaker upbringing, and he publicly preached in favor of the emancipation of slaves throughout his tenure as pastor of the Spring Street Church. Under his leadership, the church’s abolitionist reputation grew steadily throughout the early 1820s. The church’s Session Minutes note that on September 27, 1820, a free African-American woman named Phebe was admitted as a full member of the church (Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1811–1835). Phebe’s acceptance into the congregation in 1820 was remarkable not only because many contemporary churches did not allow integrated congregations, but also because slavery would not be completely abolished in New York State for another 7 years.

Cox’s popularity grew, along with the size of the church’s congregation. However, in 1825, discussions regarding the potential relocation of the church to a larger building several blocks to the south fractured the congregation. After the schism, Cox, along with the majority of the congregants, left the Spring Street Church to found the Laight Street Presbyterian Church, just six blocks away (Halsey 1886).

After Cox’s departure, what remained of the Spring Street Church’s congregation chose to continue to worship in the old church and Dr. Cox was replaced by the Reverend Doctor Henry G. Ludlow, another well-known and influential abolitionist. Both Drs. Cox and Ludlow used their pulpits to promote their anti-slavery message throughout the late 1820s and early 1830s, even though abolition was not uniformly supported among all Presbyterians or all New Yorkers at that time, and the two men soon became embroiled in the conflict between anti- and pro-slavery New Yorkers. Referring to himself during this time, Dr. Cox wrote, “I was by many regarded as a dangerous man, avoided, calumniated, and clandestinely opposed” (Fowler 1856:359).

Racial tensions peaked in July 1834, when the “Anti-Abolitionist” or “Negro Riots” broke out in New York, fueled in large part by a speech given by Dr. Cox at the Laight Street Church. Dr. Cox’s speech took place after Arthur Tappan, a prominent New York merchant and an outspoken abolitionist, shared his pew in the Laight Street Church with Reverend Samuel Cornish (Burrows and Wallace 1999). Cornish was an African-American Presbyterian minister who had presided over the First Colored Presbyterian Church and was a founding editor of *Freedom’s Journal*, one of the first African-American newspapers in New York City. Although most of the Laight Street church members—many of them former Spring Street Church congregants—supported abolition, many were infuriated by the racial integration of Tappan’s pew during church services. Even at the original Spring Street Church, African-American congregants sat in the gallery while white congregants sat in the ground-floor pews (Ibid.). In response to those who expressed their anger, Reverend Cox spoke out in support of Tappan’s attempt to promote church integration and declared that racism had no place in religion as Jesus Christ himself was “probably of a dark Syrian hue” (Ibid.:556). Other variations of this story suggest that Dr. Cox stated that “the savior of mankind was a Negro” (Fowler 1856:374).

Fig. 18.2 Illustration of the New York National Guard defending an unnamed church under attack during the 1834 Abolition Riots (Originally published in *Scribner's Monthly* (1880))



THE ABOLITION RIOT IN 1834.

Word of Cox's statement spread throughout the city and an angry mob formed and attacked the Laight and Spring Street Churches as well as the private homes of both Reverends Cox and Ludlow. Neither Reverend nor any members of their families were harmed, and, although his home was nearly destroyed, Dr. Cox "passed out of his front door through the crowd without molestation, receiving only a sprinkling of dirt and insulting language" (Fowler 1856:376). While Cox's home was left standing, the Spring Street Church was nearly demolished by the mob on July 11, when rioters entered the church through smashed windows and destroyed much of the interior. The crowd took the remnants of the demolished organ, pews, and galleries and carried them outside to create a barricade on both sides of the church against the approaching National Guard (see Fig. 18.2). To taunt the approaching troops and attract additional rioters, the mob continued to ring the church's bell throughout the ordeal (Stone 1872).

After the riots, rather than resume preaching at the destroyed Laight Street Church, Dr. Cox took his family and left the city for Auburn, New York. The Cox family returned to New York City in 1837 when Dr. Cox was called to be the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, where he would remain as pastor for many years. Cox thrived while preaching in Brooklyn, and achieved great success although he continued to be involved in controversies affecting the Presbyterian

Church. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, Cox was extremely influential in a schism in the church's government, which resulted in the formation of the New and Old Schools of the Presbyterian Church (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 1886). Despite the troubles that seemed to follow him, he remained popular among his congregants.

In 1854, when Reverend Cox's health began to fail, he retired from the clergy, although he remained active in the church until the end of his life. The Cox family spent time in both Brooklyn and upstate New York after his retirement, but Dr. Cox never returned to preach in Manhattan, the site of so much of the family's pain (Cox 1912).

Spring Street Church Burial Vaults

After the near destruction of the Spring Street Church during the 1834 Riots, a new brick structure was erected on the site in 1836. Although the new church was larger, the archaeological investigation revealed that care was taken so that the construction of the new building would not impact the burial vaults that had been constructed on the eastern side of the original church (Mooney et al. 2008). In total, four separate vaults were identified, two older vaults that were constructed of stone and two newer brick vaults which church records show were added in 1831 (Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1826-1841). The four vaults were arranged linearly from north to south, with the older stone vaults to the north and the newer brick vaults to the south (Mooney et al. 2008).

It is unclear if the vaults were constructed at the same time as the original church (circa 1811) or if they were constructed around 1820, when the first references to the vaults were documented in the minutes recorded by the church treasurer (*Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1811-1828*). If the latter were the case, then it is possible that Cox himself was influential in the initial construction of the vaults. A partial ledger recorded by the church treasurer between 1820 and 1825 shows that the church received funds from dozens of congregants for use of the vaults and also shows that many of the deceased were children (Ibid.).

Prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the deceased citizens of Manhattan were often interred in churchyard cemeteries. However, by the early 1800s, the developed portion of the city had grown substantially and small churchyards quickly ran out of burial space. During this time, the city was also plagued by outbreaks of disease, most notably yellow fever. Early notions about the nature of disease led many to believe that cemeteries were the source of these epidemics, leading to legislation banning human burials in the heavily developed portions of the city.

Through the first decades of the nineteenth century, regulations regarding human burials in Manhattan became increasingly stringent. Human interments south of Canal Street were banned in 1823, with the exception of private vaults (The Common Council of the City of New York 1917). Burials south of 14th Street were banned in 1832 and south of 86th Street in 1851 (Burrows and Wallace 1999 and Inskip 2000). The trustees of the Spring Street Church knew of the changing nature of the

laws regulating human interment in Manhattan and stipulated in their minutes on June 15, 1831, that there existed a possibility that future burials in their vaults might one day become impossible (Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1826-1841). No references to the vaults were located in church records after March 1835, although coffin plates recovered during the archaeological investigations at the site show that interments continued through at least the early 1840s (Mooney, et al. 2008). After the church could no longer legally inter its dead in the burial vaults because of the city's ban on burials in Manhattan, the vaults remained untouched beneath an alley to the east of the church even as the church expanded to cover most of the adjacent property.

The Spring Street congregation remained active until the mid-twentieth century, although it suffered intermittent periods of economic turmoil. By 1963, the congregation was dissolved by the Presbytery of New York due to low attendance and lack of funds (Montgomery 1963). The property was sold and the church was scheduled to be torn down when, in 1966, the church burned to the ground in a fire presumably started by squatters who were living in the vacant building (*New York Times* 1966). The burned remnants of the church stood for several weeks before the site was cleared and converted into a parking lot. This parking lot rested atop the forgotten burial vaults of the Spring Street Church, protecting them for nearly 40 years until the 2006 redevelopment project led to their discovery.

After the initial discovery of human remains during construction, a team of archaeologists excavated the burial vaults and removed the remains of more than 100 individuals as well as the funerary artifacts with which they were buried (Mooney, et al. 2008). These mortuary artifacts consisted of fragmented coffin wood, hinges, nails, screws, small scraps of cloth from burial shrouds or clothing, ribbons, shroud pins, and coffin plates (White and Mooney 2012). The coffin plates were the most informative artifacts recovered from the Spring Street Church vault excavations. Each of the thin metal plates was hand engraved with the name, date of death, and exact age of the deceased, recorded down to the day.

The Spring Street Church coffin plates were manufactured from a variety of metals including silver, plated copper alloy, and a soft white metal known as "Britannia." Coffin plates were typically attached to the exterior of the flat coffin lid near the head of the individual interred within it. The plates were secured with four small tacks or nails through perforations along the outer edge of each plate. Within the vaults, the coffin plates served a function similar to that of gravestones in a traditional cemetery: to identify the deceased. However, the coffins found within the Spring Street Church vaults were badly deteriorated and fragmented and none of the coffin plates recovered during the investigation were attached to a coffin lid, although one coffin lid showed a distinct shadow where a plate had once been fastened. Most of the coffin plates were encrusted with dirt, debris, and insect larva casings, rendering them unreadable. Meticulous mechanical cleaning performed at the URS Laboratory in Burlington, New Jersey, transformed the plates, revealing the names of some of the individuals interred in the Spring Street Church vaults, several of whom were identified as members of Dr. Cox's family.



Fig. 18.3 Cox brothers' coffin plate engraved: *Alfred Roe Coxe Born Feby 7, 1825. Edward Dorr Griffin Cox Born Sepr 18, 1828. Died Jan 1, 2 1832*

The Cox Family

One of the coffin plates recovered from the vaults was unusual in that rather than containing the name of only one individual, it was engraved with two names (see Fig. 18.3). The full inscription of the coffin plate reads:

Alfred Roe Coxe
 Born Feby 7, 1825.
 Edward Dorr Griffin Cox
 Born Sepr 18, 1828.
 Died Jan 1, 2 1832.

The names on the plate were cross-referenced with genealogical records that confirmed the boys were the sons of Samuel and Abiah Cox (Cox 1912). The variation in spelling of the surname suggests that the engraver may have been uncertain as to the spelling of the name or perhaps encountered difficulty working along the curved edge of the plate. No mortuary notice was found for Alfred and Edward, and it seemed as though the circumstances surrounding their deaths were destined to remain unknown. However, a mortuary notice documenting the death of their younger sister, Abiah Caroline, who died within days of her two brothers, provides more information about the tragedy that affected the Cox family in the early days of

1832. The following notice was published in the *Rhode Island American and Gazette* on January 10, 1832:

Insatiate Archer, would not one suffice?—Abiah Caroline Cox, youngest daughter of the Rev. Dr. Cox, departed this life last evening, aged 20 months. Thus, in the course of four days and a half, three members of this afflicted family have been removed by death,—all by scarlet fever. Alfred Roe Cox, aged 6 years, died on Sabbath morning; Edward Dorr Griffin Cox, aged 3 years and 3 months, on Monday morning; and both were buried on Tuesday afternoon, in the same grave and the same coffin.

The mortuary notice confirmed that the Cox family lost three young children to scarlet fever in less than a week. Although no coffin plate was recovered for Abiah Caroline Cox during the archaeological investigations of the vaults, it is likely that she was interred in the same vault with her older brothers and she was likely among the human remains recovered during the archaeological investigation.

The scarlet fever that took all three children in rapid succession is a streptococcal bacterial infection that is highly contagious in children under 10 years of age. The disease acquired its name from its two main symptoms: a characteristic red rash and high fever, often accompanied by a sore throat. Left untreated, scarlet fever remains infectious from 10 days to 3 weeks. Therefore, the death of multiple siblings as a result of scarlet fever was not an uncommon occurrence at this time, as the disease was easily passed from child to child. Numerous contemporary newspaper articles recounted similar tragic stories of several other families who lost two or more children to scarlet fever within hours or days of each other, similar to the three Cox children who died in 1832. Another instance from among the death notices in the *New York Spectator* dated December 20, 1831: “On Wednesday morning, at 4 o’clock, of scarlet fever, Henry Brotherton, aged 6 years and 20 min past 4 Lucy Frances, aged 3 years, children of Mr. John Scarborough, Printer.” Therefore, the loss of multiple children to scarlet fever was a tragic yet common part of life in early-nineteenth century New York City. Although the disease is easily treatable today, the antibiotics necessary to treat it were not commonly available until the 1940s (*New York Spectator 1831a*).

Alfred, Edward, and the younger Abiah Cox were not the only members of the family who were interred in the vaults of the Spring Street Church. The damaged coffin plate of Elizabeth Cleveland, Dr. Cox’s mother-in-law, was recovered from the same vault—the northernmost of the earlier stone vaults, which was possibly the first vault in use—in which the plate for Alfred and Edward Cox was found (see Fig. 18.4). Her copper alloy coffin plate was engraved:

Elizabeth Cleveland
Died 23 Nov 1826
Aged 70 Yrs 5 Mos 13 D

Cleveland’s mortuary notice began, “Died, at 10 o’clock A.M. on Thursday, the 23 day instant at the house of her son-in-law, Rev. Samuel H. Cox of this city, Elizabeth Cleveland relict of the late Rev. Aaron Cleveland of Connecticut” (*New York Spectator 1826*). She died of what the *Religious Intelligencer* (1826:431) described as “paralytick shock, which brought her to a bed of debility.” Born Elizabeth Clement Breed, she was the second wife of Aaron Cleveland. Aaron



Fig. 18.4 Elizabeth Cleveland's coffin plate engraved: *Elizabeth Cleveland Died 23 Nov 1826 Aged 70 Yrs 5 Mos 13 D*

Cleveland and his first wife, also named Abiah, were the great-grandparents of President Grover Cleveland.

The dates of death recorded on the coffin plates show that Elizabeth Cleveland and the two Cox boys were laid to rest in the vaults of the Spring Street Church after Reverend Cox had left that congregation in 1825. This may indicate that the Coxes had interred other family members in the vaults during Dr. Cox's tenure as pastor and then continued to bury members of their family there after he left the church in an effort to keep the family together, similar to a family plot in a traditional cemetery.

Samuel and Abiah Cox had six children before and during his tenure at the Spring Street Church: Arthur Cleveland Cox, born 1818, Samuel Hanson Cox, Jr., born 1819, James Richards Cox, born 1821, Elizabeth Rowe Cox, born 1822, William Cowper Cox, born 1824, and Elizabeth Russell Cox, born 1825 (Cox 1912). The most prominent of his children was Arthur Cleveland Coxe, who, in addition to growing up to become an Episcopalian Bishop, had adopted an older spelling of his surname, as did several of his siblings. Many of his children, however, died in childhood, including, Elizabeth Rowe, who died in 1823 at the age of 8 months. Therefore, it is possible that she may have been the first member of the Cox family to be

interred in the vaults at Spring Street Church, although a careful review of the Sexton's ledger does not include any entry for her or any reference to the Cox family. However, as the pastor of the church, Dr. Cox may have been exempt from paying for the use of the vaults and therefore would not have been included in financial accounts regarding the vaults.

Six more children were born to the Coxes between 1825 and 1834: Alfred Roe Cox, born 1825,¹ Edward Dorr Griffin Cox, born 1828, Abiah Caroline Cox, born 1830, Mary Liddon Cox, born 1831, Frances Abia Cox, born 1833, and Susan Roe Cox, born 1834 (Cox 1912). Of these six children, only the youngest two survived beyond childhood. Mary Liddon Cox died shortly after her birth in 1831, just a few months before her three siblings died of scarlet fever. A brief mortuary notice, published in the *New York Spectator* on November 29, 1831, mentioned that she died at 2 o'clock in the morning, but the notice did not indicate the cause of death or the place of burial. Although no coffin plate was recovered for her, it is likely that she was interred at the Spring Street vaults with her maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Cleveland, and other Cox family members who may have been interred there by that time (*New York Spectator* 1831b).

Samuel and Abiah then had three more children, Henrietta Wolfe Cox, born 1837, Anne Morrison Cox, born 1839, and Mary Lundie Cox, born 1842 (Cox 1912). Henrietta died in 1838, making her the sixth of Cox's 15 children to die during infancy or childhood. In 1841, Dr. Cox, by then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, was one of a number of trustees who purchased lots in Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery, which had been founded in 1838, in an attempt to save the cemetery from bankruptcy (First Presbyterian Church 1906). According to records on file at Green-Wood Cemetery, Cox's church purchased a large plot there on April 7, 1847, 2 days before Henrietta Cox was interred there, and nearly 9 years after her death (*The Green-Wood Cemetery* n.d.).

Records on file with the Green-Wood cemetery show that Henrietta's remains had been moved from the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. This suggests that the Cox family was abiding by the 1831 law banning burials in that part of Manhattan. By the time Henrietta died in 1838, the Cox family had ceased to use the Spring Street Church vaults, despite the dated coffin plates that show that other individuals were interred there through the early 1840s. However, as with Spring Street Church, Dr. Cox continued to inter his deceased family members at the church at which he preached. The First Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn contained a "minister's vault beneath the church edifice" in which a former pastor, Reverend Dr. Joseph Sanford, had been interred after his death in 1836; his wife was subsequently interred there after her death (Stiles 1870: 742). The First Presbyterian Church moved to a new building that was completed in June 1847 (Ibid.). It therefore appears that the minister's vault at the old church was emptied and the individuals resting within were moved to the newly purchased plot at Green-Wood Cemetery. Records accessible

¹ In his genealogical history of the Cox family, Henry Miller Cox (1912) lists Alfred Roe Cox's birth date as 1827, however the coffin plate and mortuary notice referenced above clearly show his date of birth to be 1825.

through Green-Wood's digital burial database (http://www.green-wood.com/burial_search/) confirm that the remains of Reverend Joseph Sanford and his wife, Ann F. Sanford, were buried at the cemetery on the same day and in the same plot as Henrietta Cox, all but confirming that Henrietta had formerly been interred in the minister's vault at her father's church.

In 1865, Abiah Cox, whom Samuel Cox had described as "my beloved partner and excellent companion in life," passed away in Brooklyn (Fowler 1856:360). Her obituary, published in the *New York Evangelist*, attributed the cause of death to what was likely an infection caused by "a boil, or malignant pustule on the hand" (E.F.H. 1865:2). Her nine surviving children surrounded her upon her death, and she was interred at Green-Wood Cemetery in the same plot as her daughter, Henrietta (Ibid.). After Abiah's death, Dr. Cox retreated to a farm in Bronxville, New York, where he lived until his death in 1880 (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 1880). Although he had remarried, Dr. Cox was laid to rest next to Abiah at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn (his second wife was interred elsewhere, although the location is unknown). Green-Wood's digital database does not indicate that any additional members of the Cox family have been interred in the same plot since Dr. Cox's burial.

Dr. Samuel Cox's Public and Private Personas

Dr. Samuel Cox was known for being extremely intelligent—he was one of the founders of New York University—and very well-spoken. After his death, James L. Corning described him as "a man of mark ... his massive head with overarching brows and dome-like forehead would suggest even to the most casual observer it contained intellectual equipment of extraordinary quality and quantity" (Corning 1900: 30). By the mid-nineteenth century, at the height of his popularity, Dr. Cox's witty remarks, which were frequently republished by various newspapers, had become known as "Coxisms" (*Harper's Magazine* 1855).

One of the more famous Coxisms was allegedly stated in response "to a casual inquiry as to the number of his children, [Dr. Cox] replied that he had ten, five of whom were wise, and five were Episcopalians" (Cox 1912:91). Dr. Cox was himself described as a "religious bigot" who once wrote a famous essay vehemently denouncing Quakerism, the faith in which he was raised, and therefore the conversion of his children to another faith was likely a disappointment to him (Burrows and Wallace 1999:551). It is interesting to note that in his quote, Dr. Cox does not make reference to those children that had died in youth or infancy when publicly discussing his children. While he was most likely not denying the existence of his deceased children, the remark may reflect Dr. Cox's refusal to expose his family's private grief to members of the general public or it may reflect his religious beliefs regarding an afterlife and the fact that the other children were no longer among the living.

It appears that regardless of the changes in his life and despite the fact that he did not publicly discuss his deceased children, it was extremely important to Cox and to his wife that the family be interred together. However, the strict laws governing

human interments in Manhattan made it impossible for the Cox family to continue using the Spring Street Church vaults. While two generations of Samuel and Abiah's family, possibly including up to five children, were laid to rest in the vaults of the Spring Street Church, Samuel and Abiah themselves could not join them after their own deaths. Upon the purchase of what they knew would be their own resting place, they moved the remains of their daughter Henrietta—possibly the only remains to which they had access given the closure of the vaults at the Spring Street Church—to ensure that at least she would be able to rest alongside them.

Dr. Cox's public persona is well documented in the historic record; numerous newspapers advertised or summarized his sermons and biographical sketches of him were published both during his lifetime and for many years after. As a beloved and well-known preacher, Dr. Cox likely presided over countless funerals, providing wisdom and prayer to help his congregants through difficult times. Despite this well-documented public life and the role he likely played in healing the grief of many, the private pain experienced by the Cox family as they lost child after child and their efforts to keep their family together in death was not as well known until the recent archaeological excavations at the site of the Spring Street Church provided new insight into the family's struggles. The children that the family lost at such young ages may have been lost to history, with no markers to identify their remains and no indication of where they and their kin were laid to rest. While the names of Alfred and Edward Cox will always be over-shadowed by their father's life and accomplishments, their names, engraved on a thin brass plate, serve as a reminder of the devastation caused by common childhood diseases in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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Chapter 19

Anthony Van Arsdale Winans: New York Merchant, and His Daughter—The *Canary of Lago Maggiore*

Diane Dallal

Introduction

On the bitterly cold night of December 16, 1835, a fire originating in Comstock & Andrews' dry goods establishment on Merchant Street destroyed Anthony Van Arsdale Winans' grocery establishment at 93 Front Street (Fig. 19.1). Winans was one of many New York merchants to experience loss in the Great Fire of 1835, a conflagration that destroyed “nearly one half of the first ward” (Auchincloss 1989:51). Astonishingly, only two people were killed but 674 buildings were destroyed, 80 on Front Street alone where Anthony V. Winans had his business establishment .

Winans recovered quickly, however, and by 1836 was back in business. Opening temporarily at 25 Water Street between Broad St. and Coenties Slip, he was not far from his customers or his original establishment. Within a year, Winans had moved into a newly constructed building at 79 Front Street at the opposite end of the block destroyed by the fire.

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Fig. 19.1 View of the Great Conflagration of December 16th and 17th 1835, from Coenties Slip, New York, NY by Bufford and Currier, 1836 (Library of Congress)

The Assay Site

Approximately 150 years later, a team of archaeologists led by Diana Wall and Roselle Henn excavated the Assay Site,¹ part of a New York City block delineated by Front and South Streets, Gouverneur's Lane and Old Slip (Fig. 19.2) (Chap. 16, this volume). During excavations in Lot 9 they uncovered the charred remains of Winans' warehouse (Louis Berger & Associates 1990:IV-1) (Fig. 19.3).

Archaeologists working in lower Manhattan sometimes find burnt layers associated with the Fire but on this occasion they discovered merchandise² stored in Winans' warehouse on the very day of the conflagration. The remarkable preservation, as well as the quantity and variety of materials in the assemblage, was extraordinary.

Fragments of wide-mouthed wicker baskets with thick reed handles were found in association with grapes carbonized by the flames. These large plump fruits were

¹ The archaeologists were employed by Greenhouse Consultants, Inc. and the site was officially known as the Financial Center Site. Located on Block 35, it was formerly the location of the U.S. Assay Office.

² The artifacts were donated to the South Street Seaport Museum (SSSM) by the developer Howard Ronson, Ltd in 1989 where they were accessioned and displayed in several museum exhibits. The artifacts also served as a study collection for interns at New York Unearthed, the museum's urban archaeology center and as the foundation of educational programs developed and implemented by the museum. The Assay site collection and, in fact, all of the SSSM's archaeological collections were later removed to the New York State Museum when the SSSM's Board of Trustees made the decision that its archaeological collections (over two million artifacts), were not related to the museum's mission.



Fig. 19.2 Aerial view of the Assay site showing 5' x 5' units placed in a checkerboard pattern in Lot 9, Anthony V. Winans lot (Louis Berger & Associates 1990, Courtesy New York State Museum, Albany, NY)

late-harvest grapes, heavy with sugar and probably destined for a local vintner. Wooden crates chock-full of wine bottles were found where workmen last stowed them (Fig. 19.4). Long-empty wooden barrels that might once have contained salted fish, beer, sugar, salt, flour or a myriad of other comestibles were concentrated near the front of the warehouse along with clumps of thread and fragments of textiles, burlap, packing material, and rope. Mounds of charred coffee beans in the barrels in which they had been shipped, peppercorns nestled in cloth bags, and heaps of blueberries were situated in different parts of the warehouse. Clay smoking pipes were



Fig. 19.3 Barrels *in situ* on the floor of Winans' warehouse (Louis Berger & Associates 1990, Courtesy New York State Museum, Albany, NY)



Fig. 19.4 A wooden crate *in situ* filled with bottles from Anthony V. Winans' warehouse (Louis Berger & Associates 1990, Courtesy New York State Museum, Albany, NY)

found fused together by the intensity of the flames, while approximately 1,500 other pipes, although charred, were recognizable as styles popular in the first half of the nineteenth century. Glass bottles that once contained English beer, ale, stout and porter, as well as French wines—many embossed “Leoville” from the St. Julien estate of the Marquis de Las Cases in the Bordeaux region of France—were also recovered (Cantwell and Wall 2001:164) some transfigured by heat and others

completely unaltered by the flames. Pharmaceutical vials, carboys, and demijohns were also present, as were broken stoneware storage jars. Lined paper, perhaps from account books and ledgers, was discovered burned to a crisp, except for a few scraps with illegible handwriting that somehow survived. The remains provided a perfect time capsule of what a particular New York merchant had stored in his warehouse on a particular December day in 1835.³

Winans first moved to Front Street, the principal grocery district of the city, in 1822. According to nineteenth-century definitions, a grocer was a trader who sold a constellation of mostly nonperishable foodstuffs: sugar, spices, coffee, tea, dried fruit, liqueurs, soaps, starches, and oils (Jaffe 1993:3). The archaeologists had found the goods, so to speak, but they knew little about the man listed in the city directories.

I was able to trace the lineage of A.V. Winans' parents and grandparents, his daughter and grandchildren. And while untangling the sexual choices and genealogical threads of a merchant's kin, patterns emerged and one surprise came after another in the documentary materials. These threads led me down unexpected paths...to a concert attended by Oscar Wilde, to the Teatro Gallo in Venice, to a villa on the Lago Maggiore, to a southern plantation in Virginia and even as far as the Courts of the Tsar.

The Winans Family Genealogy

The great-great grandfather of Anthony Van Arsdale Winans was John Winans (Jan Winants, Weinans, Wynantz),⁴ a weaver of Dutch or Prussian-Polish ancestry (c. 1640–c. 1694) who married Cornelis Melyn's daughter, Susannah (c. 1643–c. 1692) in 1664 at New Haven, Connecticut. Winans was among those New Haven and Long Island residents known as the "80 Associates" who founded Elizabeth Town, New Jersey (Burton 1937:136, 139). An inventory of his estate suggests he was literate and wealthy: he possessed a library, a rarity at the time, as well as land, livestock and gold, and silver plate (Ibid.:136). It is likely that John and Susanna Winans were buried on the grounds of the First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Their son, John (1673–1734), a carpenter, wed Remember Baldwin (1678–1722) of Milford, Connecticut. The two are buried side-by-side in the churchyard of the First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey along with many other Winans' family members. His grave marker, carved by the Common Jersey Carver (see Baugher and Veit, Chap. 14), is inscribed:

HERE LYES
Interr'd ye Body of John
Winans who Departed
This Life Novr ye 5th

³ For a complete description of the artifacts, see Louis Berger & Associates (1990:IV-121–IV-130).

⁴ Genealogical information derives primarily from Wooley (1987) but others, such as Groome (1980), O.C. Winans (1983), C.A. Winans (1937), and Major Ira Winans published 1945 by Col. Warren E. Carrey (also see <http://cwcfamily.org/winans.htm>), were also consulted.

1734 in ye 62 year of his Age
(Wheeler and Halsey 1892:161, 162)

Anthony V. Winans' grandfather Josiah (c. 1720–1779), John and Remember's son, was a hatter who married his second cousin, Experience Winans (c. 1722–1759) at Elizabeth Town. They too, are buried in the First Presbyterian churchyard (Wheeler and Halsey 1892:277). Her gravestone was also carved by the Common Jersey Carver:

Here Lyes Interr'd the Corps
Of Experience Winans the
Wife of Josiah Winans Who
Resigned her breath May ye
23d Anno Domini 1759. In ye
37th year of her Age
All Human Bodies yeld to Deaths
Decree
The Soul survives to all Eternity

“He of Revolutionary Fame”⁵

Josiah and Experience's second child, John (1745–1825), was born in Elizabeth Town and became a hatter like his father. At the outbreak of the Revolution in 1776, John Winans enlisted in the Continental Army but a serious illness resulted in his early discharge. He subsequently shipped out as a mariner aboard the 16-gun Privateer *Hancock* and was “much cut up” in the course of a fierce engagement with an enemy vessel (National Archives and Records Administration [NARA] 1820:262). Winans returned to Elizabeth Town to recuperate but was imprisoned by the British. After he was part of a Continental/Tory prisoner exchange in the spring of 1777, he enlisted in a local company of Light Horse that joined the 2nd Regiment of Light Dragoons [NARA] 1776:3). Winans was subsequently reassigned to Count Pulaski's⁶ Life Guards and promoted to the rank of Captain of Horse. At that time, he sustained a serious foot wound which was to affect his ability to provide for his family in the future (Ibid.). Winans also fought at the Battle of Germantown, Pennsylvania where his horse was killed under him. According to his service records, he mounted another steed and continued to fight, suffering a head wound from an enemy broadsword (NARA 1818:64). Winans commanded his company until 1783.

John Winans was 5'8", dark complexioned with light hair and dark eyes. As a dashing Captain of Horse in 1779, he married a Philadelphia girl, 19-year-old Anna Margaretha Minck (1760–1834). Anthony Van Arsdale⁷ Winans (1787–1849), the owner of the warehouse destroyed by the Great Fire of 1835, was the fourth of their nine children.

⁵ Correspondence of Benjamin Webb Winans, October 12, 1905 in the NJ Historical Society.

⁶ Pulaski was a Polish nobleman who fought on the side of the Americans during the Revolution.

⁷ His middle name, Van Arsdale, is “an Americanized form of an unidentified Dutch habitation name, possibly from a place called Aertsen or Aerssen, plus dal or ‘valley’” (<http://www.ancestry.com>).

The Winans Family Arrives in New York

Capt. John Winans, his wife and large brood arrived in New York City in 1806. A city directory listed “John Winans, hatter” at John Street near William Street (Longworth 1806:386). On March 31, 1818, at the age of 73, Winans applied for a military pension claiming indigence (NARA 1818:26). At that time, pensions were meted out according to financial need (Rose and Ingalls 1997:191). Winans claimed to own no real estate and his personal possessions consisted only of clothing, bedding, a trunk, chest, two chairs, and a gun, totaling \$10.62½.

He is a hatter by trade, but at present has no occupation. Declarent is unable to follow his trade he is afflicted with the Gout and the wound he received in his foot troubles him very much. He has a wife Margaret Winans with him aged 68⁸ years; she is through age & infirmity unable to do any kind of work. He does not keep house, he (has) children who contribute nothing towards support except one (NARA 1820:154).

The “one” was Anthony V. Winans, age 31 who lived with his parents, widowed sister, Susan Stevens, age 34, unmarried sisters Magdalen, 19⁹ and Catherine, 16, and brother John Calvin, age 15. A.V. Winans supported everyone but Susan. When a pension of \$20 per month was finally awarded to Capt. John Winans in 1820,¹⁰ it must have provided some financial relief (NARA 1820:26).

The Mercantile Adventures of A.V. Winans

In 1807, 20-year-old Anthony V. Winans eagerly watched dockhands unload 4 puncheons of rum and 16 barrels of sugar from a ship that had just arrived from St. Croix (*Ming’s New-York Price-Current* 1807:3). Young Winans could have sold the sugar and rum to any variety of dealers—stowed them aboard a coastal vessel to be shipped to upstate markets, sold them to a local wholesaler or even auctioned them off. In the early-nineteenth century, ship owners carried “their own cargoes but filled up the holds by carrying freight for others” like Winans (Albion 1984:39). Trade was casual to some extent, unspecialized and irregular, with merchants buying and selling bits of this and that as it came their way. After the Embargo Act was repealed in 1809, it is likely Winans continued to buy and sell relatively small amounts of goods until 1812 when he entered into a partnership with merchant James Dobbin¹¹

⁸ The record is incorrect; she was only 58 years old at this time.

⁹ Magdalen Winans changed her name to Margaret to commemorate a dead sister.

¹⁰ Twenty dollars a month would have the same purchasing power as approximately \$278 in 2007 (<http://www.westegg.com>), although another website says \$349 (<http://www.measuringworth.com>).

¹¹ Up to that time, Dobbin conducted business as *Dobbin & Tweedy* on Catherine Street until the death of his partner in 1812 (*New-York Gazette & General Advertiser* 1812:3).

(*New-York Gazette & General Advertiser* 1812:2). Their business was conducted at 39 South Street, corner of Old Slip, under the name *Dobbin & Winans*. At the grand opening of *Dobbin & Winans'* grocery establishment in July 1812, their wares included an assortment of teas—green Hyson, black Souchong and Young Hyson—and a cornucopia of alcoholic beverages: Malaga Wine, Madeira, Port, Cognac, Holland and Country gin, Spanish Brandy, and Jamaica Rum. Also on hand were boxes of brown Havana sugar, hogsheads of molasses and Muscovado Sugars,¹² as well as 1,500 pounds of green coffee (raw unroasted coffee beans). *Dobbin & Winans* also offered pimiento, indigo, chocolate, exotic spices such as nutmeg, mace, and pepper (probably peppercorns similar to those found by the archaeologists), in addition to Hullock's Cheese, Spermaceti Candles and “a general assortment of groceries, wholesale and retail” (Ibid.) The partners also placed an ad offering “Ships Stores carefully put up” (Ibid.), no doubt hoping to provision fishing boats, coasting vessels, larger merchant ships, ocean going vessels, or perhaps ships involved in the early China Trade.

It took courage to go into business during the War of 1812. Foreign commerce was nearly at a standstill and the southern coastal trade had virtually ceased. A British squadron off Sandy Hook prevented ships from sailing into New York Harbor and soon patrolled Long Island Sound. Although a few coastal vessels were able to slip into New York, most were not able to get into the city. When peace was declared in 1815, New York became the entrepot “where goods of every sort from every place were exchanged and the New Yorkers grew rich from profits, commissions, freights, and other excuses for levying toll upon that volume of business” (Albion 1984:8–10). Most of the liquor bottles found in Winans' warehouse had English shapes (Louis Berger & Associates 1990:IV-123). Ships brought back alcoholic beverages from England and the Continent. “Nearly every London packet brought a moderate amount of ale, porter, or stout.” Madeira came from Portuguese or Spanish ports by way of London or Hamburg. “Holland gin” came from Amsterdam and whiskey made its way down the Mississippi River from the Midwest or Kentucky to New Orleans and from there to New York (Albion 1984:72–73).

Similar to other nineteenth-century New York merchants, James Dobbin and Anthony V. Winans “diversified their profit sources and activities” (Jaffe 1993:8) by speculating in real estate. In 1816, they advertised for rent a 12 room, three-story brick house at 5 Gold Street, not far from Winans' residence, claiming it possessed “every convenience for a large family” (*Mercantile Advertiser* 1818a:4).

The partners were even prosperous enough to attract a thief. In January 1817, 15-year-old George Mills was captured in the act of robbing *Dobbin & Winans'* store (*Evening Post* 1817:2). At this time, in addition to the merchandise listed for sale at their opening, the partners were selling city-inspected beef and pork, bundles of Cassia (a substitute for cinnamon), London Mustard, citron and cloves, an assortment of spirits such as “Teneriffe [sic] wine,” Pierpont's and Baltimore gin (domestic

¹² Muscavado sugar is a dark brown, somewhat coarse and sticky unrefined sugar made from sugar cane. It contains no molasses.

products), Hibbart's Brown Stout, "Old Madeira in wood and glass, Genuine Red Port, excellent Claret, Old Hock, Vine de Grave, superior Jamaica Shrub, Cognac Brandy," as well as Malaga raisins and soft-shelled almonds (*Mercantile Advertiser* 1818b:1). They continued to specialize in imported and exotic foodstuffs such as spices, wines and spirits, teas, and coffee but also carried general merchandise such as candles and gunpowder. For example, in August of 1818, the schooner, *Mary Ann Chapman* arrived from Baltimore with dry goods as well as tea, brandy, and molasses for *Dobbin & Winans* and several other New York City merchants (*New York Daily Advertiser* 1818:2).

The partnership of *Dobbin & Winans* was dissolved by mutual agreement¹³ on February 1, 1819. The *Mercantile Advertiser* (1819a:3) reported that A.V. Winans would "continue to transact business on his own account" at the store at 39 South Street and at the end of March 1819, 40 hogsheads of "prime St. Croix SUGARS (sic)" were sold at auction in front of *Dobbin & Winans* store (*Mercantile Advertiser* 1819b:2). In May, Winans placed an advertisement reminding customers that he was still selling "Havana Segars" (*New-York Evening Post* 1819:3).

By c. 1820, the general tenor of trade was beginning to change and merchants were becoming more specialized in specific commodities, types of transactions, and networks of regular customers and vendors (Steven H. Jaffe, 2009, personal communication). In early May 1821, the ship *Dublin Packet* arrived from Ireland with a consignment of ten hogsheads of salt and Anthony V. Winans added "Basket Salt," (a purer finer salt derived from salt-springs rather than brine) to his inventory (*New-York Evening Post* 1821a:3). Winans advertised that he also had 44 hogsheads of Kentucky tobacco and 19 bales of Alabama cotton for sale at 39 South Street (*New-York Evening Post* 1821b:3).

In July, the ship *Atlas* arrived in New York after a 30-day voyage from New Orleans carrying cotton, tobacco, and wheat for nine merchants including Winans (*Evening Post* 1821:2).

Winans continued to transact business at 39 South Street until 1822 when he relocated to 93 Front Street where he remained until the Great Fire of 1835 destroyed the premises. He was in his early 30s when he purchased the 93 Front Street property. It was worth \$6,000 when he moved in and \$11,000 just prior to the 1835 Fire (Louis Berger & Associates 1990:III-32-33 and Appendix 2-26-27).

During those early years on Front Street, Winans shared the premises with a sail duck store and *Hinton & Moore*, (Greenhouse Consultants 1983:57), a company that handled large amounts of imported white lead, a pigment and base for paints (Depew 1895:439). Winans resided elsewhere—39 Gold Street until 1819 when he, his parents and the siblings he supported moved to 76 Frankfort St. at the corner of Cliff Street, less than a block away (Longworth 1819:431–432). The family remained on Frankfort St. until 1826 when they moved to 25 Cliff Street between Fulton Street and Maiden Lane (Longworth 1826:525).

¹³ Dobbin entered into partnership with merchant Joseph Evans and relocated to 75 Front Street (Longworth 1827:171, 189).

Winans & Company was listed by name in a city directory for the first time in 1825, the year that saw the completion of the Erie Canal (Longworth 1825:463). The Canal connected the Hudson River at Albany with the Great Lakes at Buffalo, linked New York to the hinterland beyond, opened up new markets and helped to make New York City the nation's leading port. Anthony V. Winans invested in the Peru Iron Company established in 1822 in Peru (later Clintonville) New York, near Lake Champlain. The company shipped iron goods to Troy and New York City. When a flood demolished the company's eight bloomery forges in 1830, a larger bloomery operation with 14 bloomery fires and two forges for making anchors was constructed. Anthony V. Winans was a company director at this time. By the mid-1840s, the facility was producing more than 2,200 tons of market iron and nails per year and was recognized as "the largest charcoal iron forge in the world" (Pollard and Klaus 2004:19). The Peru Iron Company also maintained a warehouse and office in New York City where Winans might have attended meetings and examined the inventory (Haegar 1981:14).

Winans was also a large stockholder and lessee of the Williamsburgh Ferry Company¹⁴ in the 1830s when the city ordered shareholders to modernize its operation by using steam boats—one boat to run from or above Stanton Street and two boats to run "constantly" from Grand Street to Brooklyn (City of New York 1917:328).

A.V. Winans was also embroiled in a legal dispute involving two enslaved women, Matilda and Sarah, who were the property of one David McCullough and who were surrendered to Winans in lieu of debt in 1836 (U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama [Mobile] 1836). Although the Winans family in New York did not own slaves (it was illegal in New York by this time), it is surmised Winans sold these women in the South to recoup his debt.

Winans Falls in Love

Anthony V. Winans experienced two life-changing events in 1835. In May his common-law wife, "Mrs. Jay," gave birth to a daughter, Ada, and in December his warehouse was destroyed by the Great Fire. Winans and the girl's mother never legally married (Wooley 1987:14). It is tempting to speculate that Mrs. Jay was a married woman whose husband had abandoned her. It is even more tempting to speculate that she was an entertainer, given what we know about her daughter's future career (see below), and entertainers—actresses and singers—were often called "Mrs.,". We don't know how she and Winans met, when they fell in love, or details about their living arrangements. Although Woolley's genealogy of the Winans family (1987:38) states that Mrs. Jay and Anthony V. Winans lived together in Burlington, VT, no evidence could be found to support that statement (Marjorie Strong, 2001). City directories place Winans in New York City at all times and family correspondence

¹⁴ A.V. Winans' younger brother, William Wanton Winans was a shareholder during the 1860s.

indicates that their daughter Ada lived at 25 Cliff Street with her father (Winans 1905). After Winans' death, however, Ada attended school in Burlington, NJ and it is possible that Wooley conflated the two Burlingtons.

Retirement and Death

Winans was a relatively wealthy man, worth \$150,000 in 1842 and 1845 (Beach 1842:17, 1845:33)—the equivalent of between 3½ and 4 million dollars today (<http://www.westegg.com/inflation>; <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare>). He retired sometime prior to 1848. His nephew Anthony William Winans¹⁵ formed a partnership with Alonzo Jones and set up business as *Winans & Jones*, grocers, at 79 Front Street, the building formerly occupied by his uncle (Doggett 1848:445). It is possible A.V. was a silent partner. The following year another nephew, Anthony Voorhees Winans¹⁶ joined the firm.

Comparable to many self-made men with a little money, A.V. followed the hordes of wealthier folk to “the wide nine-block sweep of Bleeker Street” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:458) and purchased a home at 133 Bleeker. His nephew Anthony William Winans shared the house during his uncle's lifetime and with his cousin, Anthony Voorhees Winans, continued to reside there for several years after his uncle's death.¹⁷

In 1849 an ailing Anthony V. Winans traveled to Saratoga Springs to take the waters. He died there on August 25, 1849 after a “short illness of aneurism of the heart” (*New York Post* 1849:26:37). He was 62 years old. Winans' funeral was held 3 days later at his home on Bleeker Street and he was buried in Vault 66 at New York City's Marble Cemetery¹⁸ alongside his father and mother. His sisters, several brothers and a nephew,¹⁹ were also interred in the family vault after their deaths (Fig. 19.5).

For all his business acumen, Anthony V. Winans died *in testate*. Letters of Administration were granted to his brothers William Wanton and John Calvin Winans, and his nephew, Anthony William Winans (Barber 1950–1951:86; New York County Surrogate's Court 1849:49-309-55). At the time of his death, A.V. Winans was only

¹⁵ Anthony William Winans was the son of A.V.'s brother, William Wanton Winans.

¹⁶ Anthony Voorhees Winans was the son of A.V.'s brother, John Calvin Winans.

¹⁷ He lived there until 1851 or 1852 as did his cousin Anthony Voorhees Winans (Rode 1852:749).

¹⁸ The New York City Marble Cemetery at 52–74 East Second St. opened in 1831 and is a New York City Landmark. A.V. Winans and many family members are interred in Burial Vault 66 (<http://nycmc.org/ownersvault.html>).

¹⁹ Horatio Nelson Winans.



Fig. 19.5 Anthony V. Winans, his parents and several siblings are buried in Vault 66 at the New York City Marble Cemetery, 52–74 East Second Street (Photograph by Wendy Harris; Courtesy New York City Marble Cemetery)

worth \$20,000 about \$475,000 today (<http://www.westegg.com/inflation>; <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare>).

St. Mary's Hall

In 1852 17-year-old Ada Winans enrolled at St. Mary's Hall,²⁰ an Episcopal boarding school for young ladies in Burlington, NJ (Diocese of New Jersey 1844–1924). One of Ada's classmates, Mary Haines, recalled in her diary the night several of the girls “slipped out in a boat to hear [Ada] sing in the moonlight on the Delaware river (sic)” (Harker 1935:78). They loved hearing her voice despite the fact that they were severely reprimanded by Reverend George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey and founder in 1837 of St. Mary's Hall for young ladies and of Burlington College for young men (Longest 1969:59) (Fig. 19.6).

Ada graduated from St. Mary's Hall in 1853 and traveled to Europe to further her musical education. As a merchant's daughter, she would have travelled by packet ship from the East River docks to Le Havre in France. From there, she would have

²⁰ St. Mary's Hall is the present-day Doane Academy.

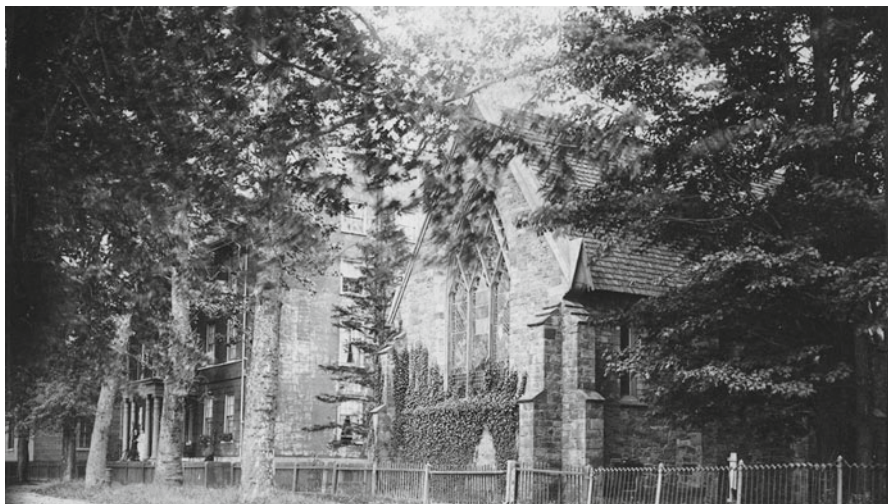


Fig. 19.6 Photo of St. Mary's Hall and Chapel in 1868. Ada Winans graduated in 1853 but returned to teach voice between 1858 and 1861 when she left for Europe to pursue an opera career (Anonymous photographer 1836, Courtesy of Doane Academy Archives)

travelled by coach to Milan where she would study (Brower 2003). “Anthony Van Arsdale had a daughter Ada,” wrote her cousin Benjamin Webb Winans to a family genealogist in 1905 (Winans 1905). “As she was about my age about 19 years old before she went to Italy, I saw her many times... (she) was a fine musician and went abroad to study music”. We can assume Ada's father recognized her extraordinary talent while he was alive. Perhaps Winans spared no expense in its development and her uncles did the same after Winans' death. It is possible Ada pursued her musical studies in New York City until her graduation from St. Mary's Hall. Numerous Italian opera troupes toured New York in the middle of the nineteenth century and many opera companies were established in the United States. The Astor Place House was the venue for wealthy opera lovers; poorer folk went to Castle Garden in Battery Park (Preston 2001:143, 144, 157). Opera singers were the “rock stars” of that era and more than 40,000 people met Jenny Lind when she arrived in New York in the early 1850s (Reich 2001:165).

From Italy, Ada wrote to her friend, Mary Haines, that a Russian “Count Troubetskoy” admired her voice and was falling in love with her (Harker 1935:78). His admiration did not result in a permanent relationship at that time, however, and Ada returned to America. Troubetskoy was a married man and it is possible the Winans' family intervened or Ada's operatic career was not progressing as she had hoped, or that she ran out of money. It is also possible that Troubetskoy could or would not obtain a divorce. Whatever the reasons, Ada returned to St. Mary's Hall in 1858 and took employment as a “vocal music teacher” where she remained for 3 long years (United States Census Bureau 1860:119; Diocese of New Jersey 1858:15, 1861:8).

In November 1861, 26 year-old Ada Winans applied for a passport. “I, Ada Winans do swear that I was born in the city of New York on or about the 24th day of May in the year 1835 [and] that I am a citizen of the United States” (NARA 1861a). She described herself as 5’5” with an oval face, fair complexion, hazel eyes, and light brown hair.

Ada’s cousin, Horatio Nelson Winans, age 31, wrote a letter on her behalf and in his description of her physical appearance, he added “stout,” a word not included in Ada’s personal application (Ibid.). He also applied for a passport for himself (NARA 1861b). Another cousin, Anthony Voorhees Winans age 34, applied for a passport for himself and his wife that same month and year (NARA 1861c). It is likely the cousins accompanied Ada to Europe. Perhaps they did not want her to travel alone or wanted to meet Troubetzkoy. It is also possible Ada’s cousins had business to conduct or were distancing themselves from the Civil War in America.

Prince Pyotr Troubetzkoy

Prince Pyotr [Pierre] Troubetzkoy fell in love with the “incomparable Ada... an American opera singer,” while vacationing in northern Italy in the 1850s (Taylor 1973:69). This statement is supported by the letter Ada wrote to her school friend Mary Haines in 1853 (see above). Troubetzkoy (1822–1892) was married to a close relative of the Tsar and had three daughters. Not long after Ada returned to Europe in 1861 and had attained some distinction as a vocalist, [and surely before 1864 when she gave birth to his son], she and Troubetzkoy embarked on a prolonged love affair. The Tsar tried to convince Troubetzkoy to return to his wife but he refused. Like her mother, Ada became a common-law spouse.

The couple produced three sons in quick succession: Pierre (1864–1936), Paolo (1866–1938), and Luigi (1867–1959). It is not clear when the couple married. St. Mary’s Hall records maintain that Ada Winans and Prince Troubetzkoy married in Venice in 1863, prior to the birth of her sons (Diocese of New Jersey 1875). It is likely Ada provided this information to the school to conceal the fact that she had borne three children out of wedlock. Prince Pyotr’s marriage to the Tsar’s cousin was not dissolved until 1869 (Haskin, 2009). However, it is certain that Ada and her prince eventually married because they later experienced a nasty divorce (Ibid.).

Troubetzkoy was an expert botanist and sought a place with a favorable climate where he could indulge his passions for Botany and Ada. He encountered it at Ghiffa near Intra on the shores of the Lago Maggiore and it was here Troubetzkoy built Villa Ada in the style of a Russian *dacha*, and its exquisite gardens²¹. Ada’s vibrant personality and love of the arts transformed the Villa Ada into a haven for artists and musicians. The Italian artist, Daniele Ranzoni, maintained a “passionate friendship” with Ada and lived on the property while painting portraits of the Troubetzkoy boys and their mother, their Saint Bernard, the Villa Ada, and landscapes of the countryside (Sebastiano 2004:27) Although one art critic claimed the Princess Troubetzkoy

²¹Ada became known as the “Canary of Lago Maggiore” (Lucy 2006:190).

was “not much to look at,” Ranzoni was so enamored that he transformed her in one painting to a “paradigm of radiant 19th century beauty, flourishing and maternal, and joyous sensuality” (Ibid.). Many great artists visited the Villa and it is likely Ada’s sons absorbed their ideas and philosophies. Pierre and Paolo (Paul) became well-known artists during their lifetimes. Luigi became an engineer, occasional artist, and chronicler of Paolo’s life.

The American Prima Donna

“The opera is a very important thing in Venice,” wrote Elinor Howells, the wife of the U.S. Consul to Venice, to a friend in 1865 (Howells et al. 1988:76). “The impresario engaged Ada Winans this year, and great things were expected [of] her. But the dampness of her lodgings gave her a dreadful cold to begin with, and the public were obliged to put up with a wretched singer [Adele Nardi in her debut] for a week or so, till they would stand it no longer and said ‘Winans now or never’—So Winans appeared” (Howells et al. 1988:77). An Italian critic enthused about Ada’s performance:

Yesterday [January 5, 1865] was the joy of Ms. Winans, and her appearance can be called a joy, as happy greetings were given to her by the crowded audience, having heard her perform. Upon seeing the beautiful and thriving persona, and hearing that voice so fresh, so pure, one would not say that she had just recovered from a sickness...and from which she is still not recovered (Locatelli 1877:129).²²

Mrs. Howells also described Ada’s debut in Verdi’s *Un Ballo Maschera* on January 5, 1865 at the Teatro Gallo, and her subsequent performances:

Her great beauty and—strange to say—her *coughing between times in her singing*—excited the admiration and sympathy of the volatile Italians so that she was applauded to the skies, and told us next day she was never so much “called out” before. But the next time she sang no better, nor the next, and their sympathy began to flag. After five or six times they applauded her efforts and sometimes quite failed to bring out a note... and after two weeks they began to hiss. Poor Winans was frightened nearly to death and had to give up the engagement, first publishing a letter in the Gazette denouncing the Venetians as the most fickle public in the world and adding she would trouble them no longer etc. a very foolish thing to do, of course (Howells et al. 1988:77).

After Venice, Ada traveled to Piacenza where she had much greater success, [no doubt she was in better voice], and then on to Barcelona where she was paid the “extravagant fee” of 3,000 francs a month (Howells et al. 1988:77)! Ada, who loved money, was delighted.

Her sons later perpetuated the myth that Ada retired from public life after their birth. However, it is clear she continued to perform with some acclaim, at least immediately after the birth of her eldest son, Pierre, in 1864, as Elinor Howell indi-

²² Translated by Julieanne Herskowitz.

cated above. Ada also made several other appearances: in England (*Musical World* 1866:26:405) and Nice where she performed *Lucrezia Borgia* at the *Theatre Italien* to raise money for the poor of that city (*Daily Southern Cross* 1873:3). In 1879, the *Gazette Musica* announced “that the Princess Troubetzkoy” would perform *Norma* and *Lucrezia Borgia* in the theater at Intra (*Chicago Tribune* 1879:39:6).

Ada and Troubetzkoy separated in 1884 and divorced in 1896. Gossips said she left him when he lost the money he had invested in the Panama Canal (Haskin, 2009). In the end, Ada kept the Villa and Prince Pyotr retired to Milan with his mistress (Ibid.).

Anthony V. Winans’ Grandsons

Artists Pierre and Paolo (Paul) Troubetzkoy exhibited their work at the World’s Columbian Exposition (the Chicago World’s Fair) in 1893 when they were in their 20s. Paul, a sculptor, took first prize. The *Chicago Tribune* (1893:240:8) described them as “handsome men, something over six feet in height, and vigorous physically and intellectually (Fig. 19.7).” The *Tribune* also noted that their mother, Princess Ada Troubetzkoy was the American-born Ada Winans. “The Troubetzkoy (sic) are decidedly democratic. They do not use their title although they belong to one of the oldest and wealthiest families of Russia” (Ibid.). Ada confided that her boys believed in earning a living and that their greatest joy was in providing her with “American comforts” (Ibid.). Ada’s elder sons clearly made good copy!

Prince (Pierre) Troubetzkoy is very handsome. He stands 6 feet 2½ inches in his stockings and can lift 175-pound dumb bells more times than most men can raise 15-pound weights. He is half an American, his mother being Miss Winans of New York. He has a brother, Paul, who looks like a Viking is even taller and bigger, and who is a sculptor (*San Francisco Bulletin* 1896:clipping).

Paul Troubetzkoy worked primarily in bronze. He taught at the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Moscow (Alley 1981:729) and exhibited his work at the 1900 Paris International Exhibition where he was awarded the Grand Prix. Troubetzkoy left Russia to live in Paris (1906–1914) but spent his summers on the Lago Maggiore, close to his mother. During World War I he was stranded in the United States.

Many of Paul Troubetzkoy’s works in bronze are in museums in the United States, England, Italy, and Spain. One of his most famous, a bust of the young Franklin Delano Roosevelt, is at Hyde Park, New York. However, his most acclaimed work is the 16-ft, 8 ton bronze equestrian statue of Tsar Alexander III now in the Russian State Museum in St. Petersburg. George Bernard Shaw called Paul “the most astonishing sculptor of modern time” (http://www.viswiki.com/en/Paolo_Troubetzkoy).

Fig. 19.7 Anthony V. Winans' grandson, Prince Pierre Troubetzkoy (1864–1936), was a celebrated portrait painter throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Photographed by Emily G. Mew c. 1900, U.S. Library of Congress)



Prince Pierre Meets His Match

In 1894, Oscar Wilde introduced Prince Pierre Troubetzkoy to the American writer, Amelie Rives Chanler, “one of the great beauties of her generation” at a concert in England (Bain et al. 1979:384). Amelie soon set sail for America to divorce her husband, John Chanler, who gallantly said, “the Prince is the man Amelie should have married” (*New York Times* 1936:26). The couple wed on February 18, 1896 at Castle Hill, Amelie’s family estate in Virginia. By all accounts, they were devoted to each other. Pierre liked to cook and walk barefoot on the lawns; he painted members of the Vanderbilt, Du Pont, Astor and Roosevelt families (Taylor 1973:73). He welcomed movie stars like Katherine Hepburn to Castle Hill although he didn’t know who she was and asked her what she did for a living. Hepburn, in turn, thought he was the gardener! Summers were spent in the guesthouse of the Villa Ada and winters in New York.

Ada’s sons were devoted and continued to visit their mother until she died in 1917 or 1919 of influenza which lead to pneumonia. She was buried in a cemetery in Pallanza, Italy.

Conclusions

In Verbania (a city created in 1936 by the union of Suna, Intra, and Pallanza), today, the family’s name and influence are commemorated in the street name—Via Troubetzkoy. Paolo’s plaster casts are in a Troubetzkoy Museum and several of his sculptures are located in parks and gardens. The Villa Ada still exists, although transformed into modern residences. In New York City, the old Winans’ residence

at 25 Cliff Street has been torn down and replaced by a modern building, the location of the Uniformed Sanitation Men's Association Local 1831.

Anthony V. Winans was a remarkably successful business man. Perhaps it was easier to gain success in New York because less emphasis was placed on class or family connections. However family connections were important to Winans. He supported his parents and siblings. Having no sons, he provided clerkships for his brothers and nephews. Later they established successful businesses of their own. He engaged in a common-law marriage and produced a remarkably gifted daughter who was raised in a close, loving, family environment where it must have seemed conceivable that a poor hatter's granddaughter could become an opera singer or even a princess. A.V. Winans created a successful business, his father a new nation, and his daughter and two of his grandsons' prominent careers in the Arts.

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Afterword

Lu Ann De Cunzo

I have spent much of my career in awe of the archaeology of New York City and the work of many of this volume's authors. The issues surround space and scale—urban excavations the size of huge but stratified lunar craters within which these archaeologists identified fragments of seventeenth-century yard surfaces and extracted artifacts from which they crafted these stories.

My first encounter with “archaeology” in New York City was more than three decades ago, when I read about the discovery of a scuttled ship during excavation for a tunnel under the Hudson River. Two things stunned me in that article: the discovery of a seafaring vessel in New York landfill, and the discussion about the social relations of the tunnel's labor force of Irish bosses and Italian laborers, *my* discovery that twentieth-century ethnicity—read “my grandparents' story”—was not just personal memory but also academic history!

Storytelling has become a medium of provocation in archaeology since then, as the scientists in us reject, and the humanists in us are attracted by, the overtly fictional reference in the term. The debate hinges in part on the distinctions that David Lowenthal (1998) and Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen (2000), for example, invoke between history and public memory or heritage. In this construct, history represents and interprets the past and the consequences of past events against standards of coherence, testability, and comparison. Heritage, by contrast, rests on declarations of faith rather than analysis and debate. It consists of “origin myths” of identity intended to create pride and prejudice by enhancing the admirable and expunging the shameful (Lowenthal 1998). In other words, Lowenthal (1998:128) asserted, “History is for all. Heritage is for us alone.”

Rosenzweig and Thelen (2000) explore how people construct public memory through collaborative, active historiography focused on experience and process. People use experience to build relationships, discover and create identity, and pass

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on legacies of *their* choosing. Besides eyewitness experience, people turn to museums as the most trustworthy source of history because they create a reality of objects and places that people can experience with their senses and respond to emotionally (Rosenzweig and Thelen 2000:187).

Archaeologists also write the past in the present through our encounters with objects and places. Does storytelling bring us too close to that shifting, contested, politicized line between public memory or heritage and history? Or can it fulfill Rosenzweig and Thelen's (2000:188–9) call for a historical practice that is both more local and intimate, and more global? Even as these historians challenged colleagues to bridge the divide, *Historical Archaeology* (2000) published a forum on storytelling in archaeology. James Gibb (2000:1, 23) considered why and how archaeologists should tell stories, proposing their value as acts of reflection “both about the past and what we, as scientists, say about the past.” At issue are the kinds of stories we tell, their purposes, and the evidence from which we craft them.

Consider journalist Russell Shorto's *The Island at the Center of the World* (2004). In what reviewers consistently described as an engaging narrative about New Amsterdam, Shorto (2004:2–3) introduces readers to the

Babel of peoples—Norwegians, Germans, Italians, Jews, Africans (slaves and free), Walloons, Bohemians, Munsees, Montauks, Mohawks, and many others—all living on the rim of empire, struggling to find a way of being together, searching for a balance between chaos and order, liberty and oppression. Pirates, prostitutes, smugglers, and business sharks held sway in it. It was *Manhattan*, in other words, right from the start: a place unlike any other, either in the North American colonies or anywhere else.... This island city would become the first multiethnic, upwardly mobile society on America's shores, a prototype of the kind of society that would be duplicated throughout the country and around the world.... [B]eneath the ... myth and politics and high ideals, down where real people live and interact, Manhattan is where America began.

“Manhattan is where America began.” As the authors of *Tales of Gotham* attest, no it isn't! “America” began in many places, and long before the Dutch landed on the island. Archaeologists have much to learn from Shorto about storytelling, but we can concur with historian and reviewer Paul Otto (2005:183) who warned colleagues that Shorto “often fails to discern significant biases [in the primary records] and takes them at face value” to shore up an origin myth that is more heritage than history.

Tales of Gotham, rather, aims to help readers “re-vision” the history of New York. Anne-Marie Cantwell leads the way, writing of the natives' first encounters with the Dutch “monsters of the sea.” Her narration of Dutch colonization as a conquest of the Munsee Lenape is unambiguous: “In the seventeenth century, they *were* [italics added] the Americans;... this was their country.” Moreover, the Munsee “looked after the first Europeans” and even bore their children. In return, the Dutch betrayed them, tragically “widowed” their landscape, and crafted a colonial world that both forgot and ignored them. The archaeological fallout includes the destruction of sites, lack of interest, disbelief that any material record survived, and the excavation of only a few Munsee sites long ago.

To reclaim the place of Lenapehoking in the historical geography of Manhattan, Cantwell introduces us to two seventeenth-century Munsee men, patriot-warrior

Wampage and diplomat Penhawitz, who emerged as leaders of their embattled people facing unprecedented demographic and ecological catastrophe. Their biographies form the microhistory of Cantwell's plot, the subjugation of Lenapehoking. Excavated points that Munsee artisans transformed from European copper and brass into new, "hybrid weaponry" embodying old powers of life represent initial efforts at accommodation and incorporation. But this "middle ground" of indigenized European objects and ideas was short-lived, and Lenapehoking became "terra afflicta."

The Dutch felled the forests, cleared the land, planted crops, and raised livestock brought from home in an astonishing feat of ecological imperialism. Coupled with the devastations of introduced diseases and violent clashes, more than 90% of the Munsee became victims of the conquest.

Yet Cantwell refuses to leave the readers despairing of this history. Munsee and neighboring peoples were not eradicated. They survived, and their survivors led a diaspora that Cantwell compels us to remember and honor. Archaeologists retrieved and curated those metal arrowheads and, with our stories, transform them into icons of the Munsees' determination to defend their people and their culture. Archaeologists discovered burials of their ancestors on Ellis Island, and collaborated in a homecoming of tribal descendants to rebury them with dignity and ceremony.

Whereas archaeologists are active characters in Cantwell's storyline, they at first seem irrelevant in Richard Schaefer's when the reader learns that the principal New York landscape in his account, the Dutch *Hortus Medicus*, has almost certainly been destroyed. It is the questions Schaefer asks, the ways he uses the textual and graphic evidence, we discover, that qualifies his as an archaeological story. It is a story of maps, gardens, plants, bodies, and beliefs.

Schaefer begins by shifting our perspective from the Munsee to the colonizers. The Dutch we meet are neither the ecological imperialists intent on corrupting and exploiting the New World environment that Cantwell portrayed, nor the tulip gardeners of popular tourist imagery, but rather tenders of "healing" and "teaching" landscapes. From arguably imprecise representations of Manhattan gardens on a copy of a seventeenth-century plan, Schaefer leads readers through an exploration of Dutch, and more generally, European understandings of the human body, how it worked, and how to tend, collect, and deploy elements of the plant world in its maintenance. In essence, Schaefer narrates the material and ideological culture of colonial New Netherlands health care. Together, Cantwell and Schaefer introduce us to new perspectives on colonial New York as a place, those of indigenous landscape and botanical healing landscape.

The next three authors continue this perspective-shifting, directing our gaze to women of New York in a traditionally male-centered colonial landscape. Sara Roeloffse, Maria van Cortlandt van Rensselaer, Alida Schuyler van Rensselaer Livingston, and Ann Elizabeth Staats Schuyler emerge as influential, responsible, powerful, multitasking, even formidable New Yorkers at the hand of three of New York City's pioneering women archaeologists, Meta Janowitz, Nan Rothschild, and Joan Geismar. Together, these colonial women's lives spanned almost a century and a half, from Roeloffse's birth in the Netherlands in 1626 to Schuyler's death in New

York about 1769. Janowitz, Rothschild, and Geismar, however, argue that for all the commonalities in the lives of elite colonial New Amsterdam and New York women, they cannot, and must not, be reduced to a stereotype. They were neither merely passive instruments of male power, nor our ancestral feminist prototypes. Their distinctive life histories provided different views on the construction of gender in colonial America as they variously filled roles as business partner, landlord, estate manager, culture broker, interpreter, and caregiver.

Janowitz approaches Roeloffse as a challenge: how do we reconnect the fragmentary bits of past lives like hers into interesting, informative narratives? Selecting one document (her will), one object (her silver bodkin), and one building (her bakehouse), Janowitz unpacks them and then connects them with others to recount Roeloffse's life history. Although neither the bakehouse nor bodkin survive, they serve to underscore Janowitz's narrative themes. Readers come to know Roeloffse in familiar roles as daughter, wife and mother, feeding, clothing, and sustaining her family, but also as an unexpected force in her community. Like other Dutch colonial women, Roeloffse owned real estate and enslaved Indians and Africans, which she willed to her children. She also played an important public role as an interpreter for the Dutch and Indians, perhaps even facilitating trade at the market near her home.

With her study of the lives of Maria van Cortlandt van Rensselaer and Alida Schuyler van Rensselaer Livingston, Rothschild literally and figuratively writes the next chapter of a gender-conscious history of New York. Van Rensselaer and Livingston represent the next generation of women born in the colony of elite Dutch parentage. Like Roeloffse and her mother before her, they did not live a settled existence in the growing town; rather their family lives and marriages led them to traverse the larger landscape of southern New York between Manhattan and Rensselaerwyck (around Albany). For Rothschild, the interesting and important stories lie in these individuals' "embodiment" as elite Dutch women and in the ways that their familial "entanglements" shaped their identities and experiences. She finds these issues especially compelling because van Rensselaer and Livingston lived through the historical moment of New Amsterdam's transformation from a Dutch colonial outpost to an English one.

Rothschild faced the same dilemma as Janowitz—an archaeologist without a site! Her knowledge of van Rensselaer and Livingston is also a narrated, textual one, constructed principally out of the correspondence they and their relatives exchanged. From these documents Rothschild composes object-centered histories, for the women wrote of the things they sent back and forth across the Atlantic and the colony to connect their families and craft identities. They also wrote of their engendered bodily experience, "in sickness and in health." Through the excerpted letters Rothschild shares, we overhear these women's business dealings and intimate conversations. Never meant for our eyes or ears, they are all the more compelling for that. The letters reveal the women's common experiences and views, influenced by their time and place on the colonial frontier, their gender and their class much more than by their Dutch heritage.

Rothschild came to understand van Rensselaer and Livingston's social and economic responsibilities, and power, as particular to their class and enabled by their

abilities to manipulate men. Alternatively, the life experience of Livingston's niece, Ann Schuyler, a widow for 40 years, suggested to Geismar that despite the legal constraints faced by New York women under English law, they played crucial and public roles in the economic and political life of the city.

Over the course of Schuyler's lifetime, New York experienced phenomenal growth and in many ways, revolutionary change. Of Dutch ancestry like the subjects of Janowitz's and Rothschild's chapters, Schuyler's life story both parallels and departs from those of her senior relations. Her lengthy widowhood made possible her entrepreneurial mercantile career recorded in detail in her will, ledgers, and other documents. The ledgers in particular helped Geismar to situate Schuyler in relation to her more than 700 clients and customers, which included numerous prominent men and women. They also brought her to Geismar's attention to begin with, as she became the owner of record of 175 Water Street upon her husband's death. This water lot, a prime piece of real estate in late twentieth-century New York, became the subject of one of the city's most expansive, and fascinating, archaeological projects. Eighteenth-century "made" land, the lot is the product of a European technological tradition extending back into antiquity applied to the growing demand for land in New York. Among the amazing finds were a scuttled merchant ship incorporated into cribbing that served to contain the landfill. The ship and an awesome array of eighteenth-century material culture buried in the landfill offered Geismar and her colleagues insight into the diversity of colonial New York, and the place of women like Ann Schuyler who "literally shaped the city."

The burials of thousands of other colonial New Yorkers who shaped the city no longer remain visible and marked above ground. Many of them may never have had a material memorial to mark their eternity. An archaeological rediscovery of one such burial ground in the 1990s provoked a public debate with international political and social consequences. Two archaeologists welcoming the opportunities engendered by the public outcry surrounding the rediscovery of the African Burial Ground, Cheryl La Roche and Jean Howson introduce readers to a few of the project's many stories. The burial ground's remains told of captive Africans' cultural expressions preserved in the way people laid to rest their friends, family, and sometimes, their captors. In essence, the burials reified rituals and life courses and identities. In the diaspora of postrevolutionary New York, the African Burial Ground's story was one of closure and erasure from the landscape and the memory of generations of New Yorkers. Now, though, we have the stories of the *process* of recovering the African Burial Ground, physically, politically and socially, and of the individuals laid to rest there.

La Roche enlivens the Revolutionary period and the mostly enslaved African American actors who lived, and died, in its conflict-ridden landscape, while Howson narrates the lives of individual African American New Yorkers. La Roche does examine African *bodies* in diaspora as sites of aesthetic cultural expression. Women's and men's stories, she argues, are told by the preserved self and the beads, military buttons, and other objects that adorned them. The power of her essay, however, lies in the way she draws the reader's attention to African Americans on the world stage of New York City in the Revolutionary era. She elucidates the conflict between the colonial city's growing need to control and the public protests—of white colonists,

not enslaved Africans—for liberty enacted on the city Commons, the symbolic and governmental center of power, adjacent to the African Burial Ground. In this context, the burial ground symbolizes the burial of African lifeways untenable in the captivity of New York and the appropriation of the “forces of black liberation,” as the city’s African American population became the target of colonial officials’ efforts to impose social control. Heightened fear of slave revolt during the Revolutionary era led to increasing constraints on movement through the city even while Patriots fought for their liberation from the tyrant England. Containment and enclosure, invisibility, punishment, denial of cultural practice pervaded the experience of the city’s African Americans even as both Patriots and Loyalists depended on their labor and strategically offered freedom to supporters. At the war’s conclusion, thousands accepted French and British offers and fled the city in search of freedom. Two years later the cemetery closed, and its “erasure” from the landscape began almost immediately.

Howson is drawn to a coffin unearthed in the burial ground bearing the hammered epitaph “H. W.” The skeleton was that of a man only in his late 30s, likely African born, but who had arrived in the city some time before his death. He had worked hard, lifting and moving heavy weights, and lived on a nutrient-deficient, high-carbohydrate diet. Both likely contributed to the systemic infection and chronic iron deficiency anemia that plagued him, and which were inscribed in his bones. H.W. shared the city’s streets with Ann Schuyler in the years before the Revolution, though not her experience of them. Also unlike Schuyler, he may have lost his life at another’s hand, evidenced by apparent trauma to his skull. The particular circumstances of his death elude examiners today, but that in life he witnessed personal and global transformations, transitions and transferences is certain.

Rituals mediate and commemorate transformation, and Kate Morgan explores how in the past and the present. Her point of departure is Pinkster Fest, a hybridized Dutch springtime Pentecostal festival and remembrance of King Charles, an African prince sold into slavery. Rich in symbolic negotiation of slavery and racism, the dancing “mayhem” of Pinkster Fest was deeply ironic in its performance setting, costume, parody, and name. Developed in the context of codifying New York’s slave regulations, amidst a growing concern about insurrection, this ritual of inversion conjures parallels with, and suggests origins of Breakdance, and now Hip-Hop. The point is that Breakdancing, Hip-Hop, ritual, and festival may invert as well as enforce solidarity, and incite insurgency, the moment at which “play” shifts to “protest.”

Morgan’s story keeps readers on the streets of the city, watching her watching Breakdancing! Her story, set in 1979 on the first major urban excavation in Manhattan, tells of a New York immersion experience in the present yet grounded in a past on the brink of transformation. She writes of another form of performance in the urban-street theater of identity, the “exotic virtuoso” of the young, street dancing for money and to express solidarity. In the eighteenth century, the dancers were African Americans, and the setting Catherine Street Market, at Front Street and the East River. Inside and outside, the market provided the stage on which food, goods, and enslaved people, were traded.

The Revolution and its aftermath amplified the uncertainties inherent in the transformations and transitions New Yorkers experienced. Diana Wall's and Charles Cheek's accounts of Daniel Van Voorhis, Wiert Valentine, and their families are striking first because they elucidate the kinds of social and political agency that H.W. and fellow captives were denied. These micro-ethnographies, to cite Wall, explore the processes of nation-making through the lives of these new Americans. During their lifetimes, New York was coming to hold a special place in the U.S. and the capitalist globalizing economy. Their stories help reveal how.

Silversmith Daniel Van Voorhis and his family moved to New York City in 1784, settling on Wall Street in lower Manhattan. Wall's narrative speaks to the crises of identity faced by republican citizens of the new Anglo-American nation in the "volatile post-colonial city." She locates the Van Voorhis' crises within four interpenetrating facets of identity: citizenship, ethnicity, occupation, and kinship. Excavations at the Barclays Bank archaeological site on Wall Street yielded material evidence that supplements the paper trail left behind by this family of "ordinary" federal-era New Yorkers. The transition from colonist to citizen was complicated by the ambiguity with which Americans referenced both ancient democratic and republican models, and by the new opportunities for exclusion that nation-building bestowed. The Van Voorhis accepted classical republicanism hesitantly and incompletely. In their home, they incorporated the new ideology embodied in classical imagery. But Catherine Van Voorhis bore and raised nine children, rejecting Republican motherhood and the limits it placed on women's participation in the political arena. For Daniel, the transformation involved more than republicanism as a result of its Anglo-centrism. A descendant of early Dutch settlers, Van Voorhis challenged the nation's Anglo origin narrative in the theatre of identity politics. He joined a special Dutch Masonic lodge and maintained elements of "Dutch" style in his home, but then chose to join the Anglican church to worship. In the economy, too, he occupied a position "betwixt and between" as a skilled craftsman and importer facing the transition to a new capitalist order. Family connections still governed his productive relations, for better and for worse, and in the end, the Van Voorhis remained ambiguous in their deference to the ideals of class privilege and political power.

Another New York craftsman died the year the Van Voorhis arrived in the city. Stone cutter John Zuricher literally left his mark on colonial New York, and on the surrounding landscape as well. Zuricher carved gravestones memorializing colonists whose remains were laid to rest in at least 48 cemeteries in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and even South Carolina, from the 1740s through the Revolutionary era. New York's most prolific colonial gravestone carver, Zuricher left behind a trail of hundreds of headstones, footstones, table tombstones, and other cut stone work. Today these "material memories" evoke the lives of Dutch Reformed, Anglican, Presbyterian, Huguenot, Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist colonists and honor his craftsmanship and artistry. In their narrative, Sherene Baugher and Richard Veit document Zuricher's distinctive and evolving style, contextualize his work, and explain his popularity to these diverse religionists. Like Janowitz, Rothschild, and Geismar, they highlight the theme of Dutch-Anglo relations and identities. Zuricher associated with New York's Dutch and German Reformed Churches. His customers,

however, included New York's most elite Anglicans, Baptists, even Jews, and Zuricher carved in Dutch and English. The unexpected breadth of his customer base challenges our image of both religious distinction and ethnic identity in colonial New York. The prevalence of both death's head (mortality imagery) and cherubs crowning the stones of diverse religionists evidences a multivalence, ambiguity, and shared cultural ideology previously denied. In addition, their findings trouble the assumption that adopting the English language signified acculturation and abandoned heritages. Rather than simplistic interpretations of stylistic change, Baugher and Veit remind us that colonial identities developed through individual and familial negotiations and in diverse public and private performances. A gravestone, the final performance of a person's identity by those left behind, thus carried special power. For all the fluidity and multiplicity of meanings encoded in this artistic form, Zuricher's commonly carved epitaph, "Life How Short, Eternity How Long," still resonates clear and true across the centuries.

While Baugher and Veit attend to New Yorkers' religious and ethnic identities, Charles Cheek's depiction of another early republican New Yorker of Dutch heritage, Wiert Valentine, avers the overarching significance of family. Valentine was neither elite like the seventeenth-century women we have met, nor captive like H.W. and others resurrected from the African Burial Ground, nor quite a skilled master artisan like Zuricher and Van Voorhis. A cartman, Valentine's work moving goods across the landscape was essential to the city's operation. Transportation into and across the city certainly remains a crucial and challenging issue of relevance today. Cheek gives voice to Valentine recounting his life as a story of significance and success and tragedy. Informed by Graham Hodge's *New York City Cartmen* (1986), Cheek grants Valentine cognizance of his own significance in the chaos of republican city politics and commerce. Through the fictional interview Cheek composed, we learn who Valentine was, what he did, and what he thought of his life and his and his wife's "stuff"—including that fabulous jug bearing a monkey astride an ass, a satirical representation of the politics of his times. Early republican identity politics of inclusion vs. exclusion foreshadow another concern at the front of our consciousness today, prompting readers again to connect past and present. Concluding his story by deconstructing it and presenting the evidence on which he crafted it, Cheek reflects on the interpretive issue that storytelling raises for us all. "How much of the story is my projection of the present, my interests, into the past?"

Marie-Lorraine Pipes is also particularly attentive to this question when confronted by an unusually large and varied assemblage of late eighteenth to early nineteenth-century food waste and foodways material culture recovered from two dock privies in lower Manhattan. For her, the research process *is* the story, or at least a story of equal significance to that her research led her to tell. Pipes returns readers to the archaeologist's tales of garbage, in this case that of Cortlandt VanBuren, grocer and Shaman of the Tammany Society. She relates the processes of telling time with garbage, telling what it was and where it came from, and ultimately, telling of the contests over fashioning a national identity. The account begins with ceramics that place the privy filling at the turn of the nineteenth century, and then turns to the bones dumped therein, the remains of enough meat to feed almost 15,000 people!

VanBuren's activism in the Tammany Society and the well-documented public celebration of the values of liberty and equality in early republican New York lend support to Pipes' interpretation of this assemblage as the remains of public feasting.

Parades and feasts became stages for political display and contest among many parties negotiating social difference within a larger national identity. The Tammany Society, for example, symbolically appropriated Native American identities of male power and hierarchy (Shamans, Sachems, Tribes, Braves). Pipes' perspective as a zooarchaeologist and anthropologist led her to examine how the parade and feast organizers transformed the ordinary—eating beef for dinner—into the extraordinary sphere of ritual. Butchers figured prominently in these events, parading a large bullock or cooked carcasses through the streets to the feast site, and carving the beef roasts. Herein lay the origins of public rituals like Independence Day that we still enact today, albeit with hamburgers and hot dogs substituting as the central ritual foods! But that's another story.

Wendy Harris analyzes another way that past and present merge on the city's streets, in the "trails of memories" that we all create. Through a fictional afternoon peregrination, Harris introduces us to the city that Stephen Allen described in his memoirs. Allen (1767–1852), a sailmaker, New York City mayor, state assemblyman and senator, social reformer and activist, is hailed by historians for his "lifelong adherence to the egalitarian ideology of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian urban artisan class." Set in 1808, when Allen was 41, Harris suggests that the power and trauma of the Revolutionary experience of his childhood fixed his "sense of place" in New York. The city in revolution—another *terra afflicta* a century and a half after that Cantwell describes in New York's first story—dominated his memoryscape, and thus his (and our) first stop is the Moravian Church, a place that greatly impacted his moral and political values. Next on this "walk down memory lane" is the home of Allen's uncle and aunt near the City Common, another site of public rituals, in this case, too, celebrating freedom. From there he ambles to the Hudson River shore, re-envisioning British warships shelling the city during the Revolution, when his family joined the one-third of the residents that fled. Continuing along a path of Revolutionary memory, he walks on to the site of his sailmaking master (and Loyalist) and the Royal Navy Shipyards, where he had faced the prospect of impressment into British naval service. On to Liberty Street, Allen paused at the site of the British prison and hospital that had occupied the Friends meetinghouse, where large numbers of patriot soldiers lived and died in horrific conditions. This, he reminisces, was only one of many churches the British soldiers appropriated and gutted for use as prison hospitals, using the contents for "every indignity which the savage mind of our invaders could invent" (Allen 1827:20). Finally, to ease his mind, Allen strolls to Broad Street, where George Washington had given his now famous speech at the war's end in 1783, a quarter century before.

Ironically, Stephen Allen, sailmaker and child of the Age of Sail, died in a steamboat fire at age 85. The world, and New York City had changed. Indeed, Harris aptly captures the city's essence as constant motion and change. Could Allen walk the same streets today, he would recognize *nothing* except elements of the street plan. Harris notes that very little remains even from her memoryscape of the South Street

neighborhood, fixed in the 1970s when redevelopment and the archaeology of Allen's sail loft brought her to this part of the city.

The bit of SoHo real estate that are the subject of Elizabeth Meade and Rebecca White's ministerial tale had been transformed from an open rural landscape to an open urban landscape—i.e., a parking lot—between the early nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries before coming to the attention of developers in 2006. Reverend Dr. Samuel Hanson Cox (1793–1880) was still a young boy in Philadelphia when Stephen Allen took his hypothetical memory walk through New York, but in 1820 he, his wife, and two children had moved to the city so Cox could take up the post of pastor of Spring Street Presbyterian Church. Over the years, the Coxes had 13 more children. While Stephen Allen devoted himself to the needs of the urban artisan class, Cox struggled to meet the needs of his growing family as well as those of the city's African American community. His sacrifices for denouncing racism and racial segregation earned him a place in the city's history. In the summer of 1834, Cox found himself targeted in race riots that destroyed the church and much more, and forced the family to flee the city. Beneath the parking lot that had sealed the church's cemetery, archaeologists discovered evidence of the personal tragedy that the family had also endured in the 1830s. Among the more than 100 individuals discovered in four burial vaults lay two of the Coxes' young sons, easily identified by their inscribed coffin name plates. Church records and newspapers reported that the Coxes lost a daughter as well as two sons to scarlet fever, all within the first week of 1832. Altogether, six of the Cox children died in infancy from disease outbreaks that devastated the urban population. The Coxes' experience reminds us of this all too common element of New York life.

The final story in this volume also begins in tragedy, then expands into a kind of aesthetic of eccentricity and success, leading native New York suburbanites like me to nod knowingly and murmur, "only in New York." Like Meade and White, Diane Dallal adopts a genealogical mode that flows backward and forward in time from a central male figure. The year after race riots erupted in the city, Anthony V. Winans (1787–1849) lost his Front Street grocery in the "Great Fire of 1835" that left more than 670 buildings in ruin. Winans' warehouse numbered among those lost, and although he was back in business nearby within the year, archaeologists discovered that he had not salvaged his inventory. They found it, remarkably well preserved. Winans specialized in imported and exotic foods and beverages, and the archaeologists' trowels revealed wine grapes and bottles, barrels of food, textiles and sewing sundries, coffee beans and spices, fresh fruit, tobacco smoking pipes, bottles of imported brewed and fermented beverages, and much more. Remarkable as it is, this is not the story Dallal sets out to tell. Instead, she treats readers to a quintessentially New York saga of how the son of a disabled veteran of the American Revolution became a wealthy and prominent merchant, whose daughter and grandsons achieved international acclaim as musical and fine artists. It commemorates social liberalism (a soap opera of common law spouses, affairs, and divorces), economic savvy (Winans' rise from commerce to investment in real estate, iron, and transportation), family (at age 35 Winans purchased a home for himself, his parents and siblings), transnationalism (lives lived between the U.S., Russia, and Italy), tal-

ent, and even love and heartbreak. It spotlights opportunity born in New York's international connections and prominence in commerce and the arts. In sum, it reprises many of the book's storylines about what it has meant to be a New Yorker.

So, what has it meant to be a New Yorker? How to interpret their stories, or rather, their archaeological biographies? The storyline that stands out to me, one of many embedded in this volume, portrays New York as a distinctive city of unremitting change, whose residents contribute, and cope, ever negotiating the present with one eye on the future and one on the past. A city in constant motion demands citizens with the strength to act and adapt, to overcome tragedy and suffering, and to move on. The New Yorkers in these stories face three revolutionary changes: the Dutch conquest of native Manhattan and the introduction of African captives, the English conquest of the Dutch, and America's independence from its colonial masters. Men and women, young and old, Lenape, Europeans, and Africans, enslaved laborers, merchants, artists, and politicians, they confront the challenges of change and carry on, remembering.

Listening to these stories of New York at the conference in "old" York, England, I was struck by how the cities present two vastly different memory landscapes: that of "Old" York so *ancient*, and that of New York so constantly renewing, *postmodern*, seemingly striving to submerge its past. There is a sort of irony in this; New York is fifteen centuries younger than York, with correspondingly less historic fabric to preserve, and yet we can glimpse "old" New York (at least in Manhattan) only in fleeting palimpsests of street plan, fortification walls, buildings... and in museums, monuments, and memorials.

New York archaeologists wrote these stories in a memory space framed and inspired by the rediscovery of the African Burial Ground and the destruction of the World Trade Centers. Like other people in other places, New Yorkers have created memorials to remember and honor people whose lives were taken from them in ways we do not accept. The cityscape features memorials to AIDS victims, soldiers, John Lennon, John F. Kennedy, Jr., victims of the Irish famine and of the *Titanic* sinking, to name a few. As archaeologists, we must wonder how and why New York has come to have the kinds of monuments and memorials it does—in object and in text—and not others. We have come to understand such commemoration as public contests over meaning as we explore processes of choosing who and what to publicly memorialize and how to represent the memory.

In 1991, archaeologists "re-discovered" the African Burial Ground, provoking community demands to face the historical shame of slavery and its legacy of racism in the city. The burial ground story of loss, remembrance, and a community taking charge of its history has become iconic in the canon of American historical archaeology. In the great tradition of New York political activism, the African Diaspora community assumed the responsibility to protect and honor in death those denied both by the white world in life. They embraced this historical moment as an opportunity to promote healing.

Ten years after the African Burial Ground returned to New York's spatial consciousness, and in the course of only a few hours, the World Trade Centers became a smoking crater, overwhelming all other spatial images of the city for months.

Columbia University archaeologist Lynn Meskell witnessed the catastrophe and entered the dialogue about what to do with, and on, Ground Zero. “There is something inherently disturbing about the incipient musealization of Ground Zero,” she wrote, “about the desire to instantly represent it, capture its aura, commodify it, and publicly perform it again and again, simply because we can.... One has the sneaking suspicion that already this negative heritage will become at best a global commodity fetish or, at worst, a nightmarish theme park” (Meskell 2002:560). The subsequent story of Ground Zero has featured elements of both, along with huge amounts of money and politicking. A design competition for a memorial coincided with reburial of the excavated individuals in the African Burial Ground in 2003, and soon thereafter, the conference session that became this volume was conceived.

In the heart of lower Manhattan, the African Burial Ground and Ground Zero are now both spaces apart, sacred places rich in polyvalent symbolism, public memory, and personal meaning. The National September 11 Memorial and Museum “attest[s] to the triumph of human dignity over human depravity and affirm[s] an unwavering commitment to the fundamental value of human life” (http://www.africanburial-ground.gov/Memorial/ABG_MemorialDesign_RodneyLeon.htm), valorizing New Yorkers’—and Americans’—strength, individuality, and resilience, offering a place to “live” the memories as they evolve and change over time. The African Burial Ground National Monument affords a “place of offering” enlivened by the cultural practices and symbols of the African Diaspora in New York, part of a planned processional landscape of African heritage in the city. Its dedication:

For all those who were lost
 For all those who were stolen
 For all those who were left behind
 For all those who are not forgotten (http://www.africanburialground.gov/Memorial/ABG_MemorialDesign_RodneyLeon.htm)

The “Tales of Gotham” narrated in this volume were born in this historical moment of intense grief, escalating and exploitive commodification, and terrorist rage directed at the consumerist excesses global capitalism has wrought—at “us.” They are stories from, and parables for, our times. They are tales of conquest, tragedy, sorrow, courage, artistry, family, and memory that bring the past into the present to buoy, comfort, and outrage us. May they inspire empathy and reflection, engender understanding, and incite action for the future. And when you walk the city, remember the *millions* of others who have walked those streets every day, each with their own stories in the perpetual recounting of New York.

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