

# Chapter 16

## Evidence of Public Celebrations and Feasting: Politics and Agency in Late Eighteenth-Early Nineteenth Century New York

Marie-Lorraine Pipes

### Introduction

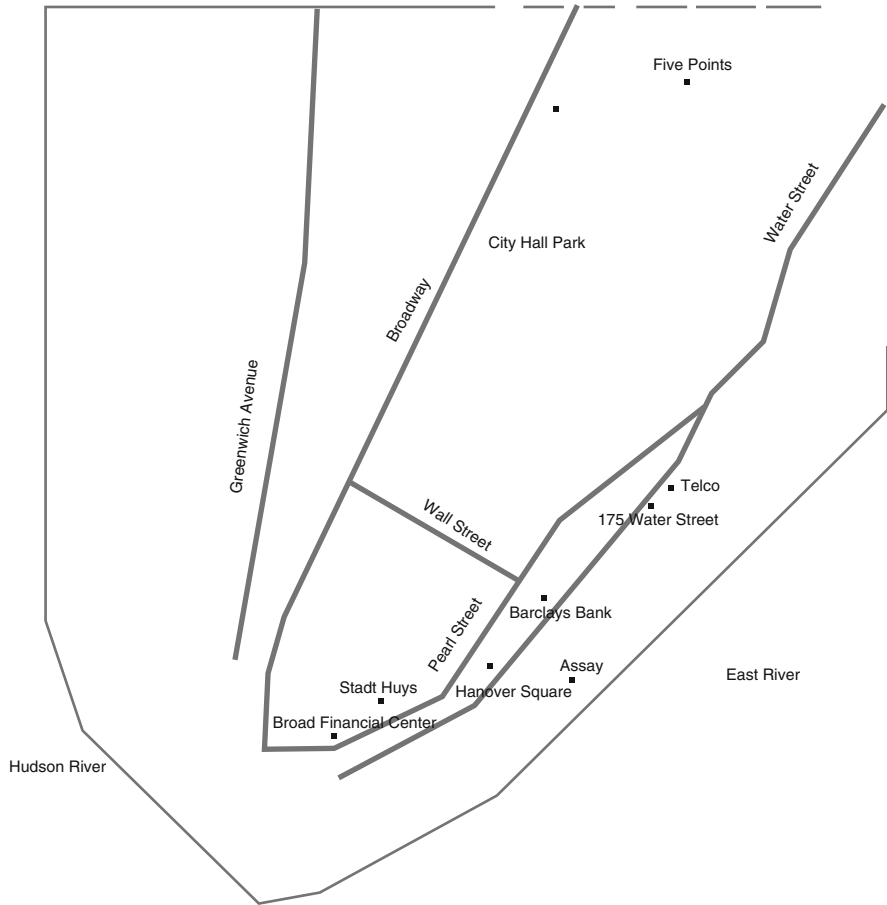
At the end of the Revolutionary War the United States emerged as a nation hardly able to stand on its own political and economic feet. The former colonies were barely united, composed of a heterogeneous mix of people who spoke different languages, were ethnically diverse, and shared little in terms of 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.

---

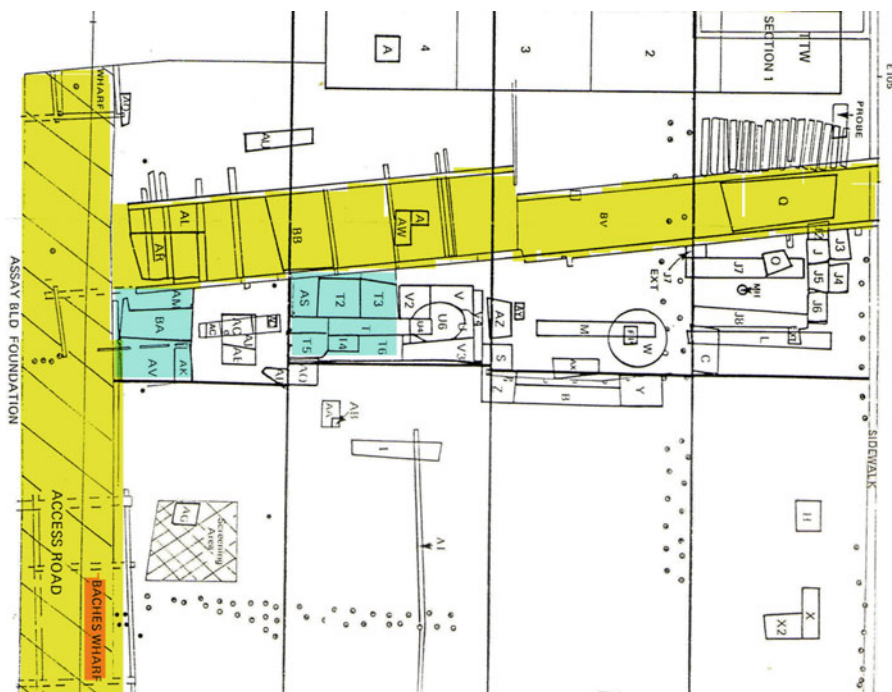
M.-L. Pipes (✉)

State University of New York at Buffalo and Marie-Lorraine Pipes,  
Zooarchaeologist Consultant, 323 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564, USA  
e-mail: pipesml@aol.com



**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.

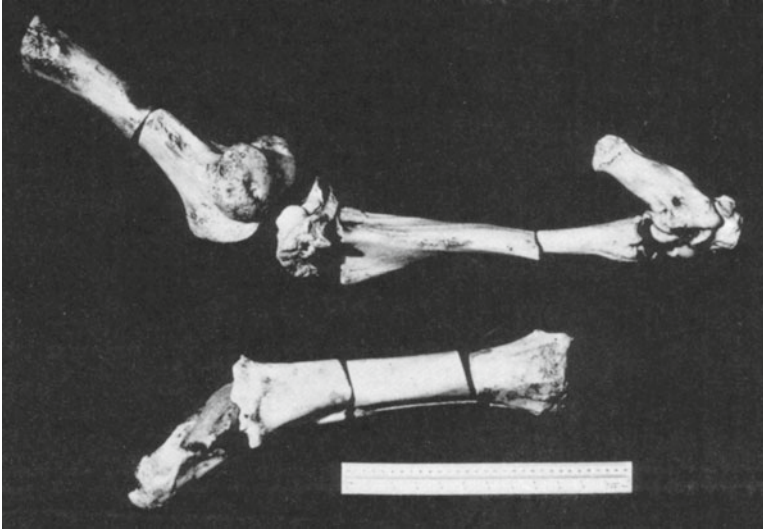


While the artifacts and ecofacts by themselves were not unusual, their depositional context signaled that they represented something unique, beyond an association with a household, and were more likely refuse from one or several major public celebrations. The ceramics consisted of large sets of creamware, 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 (Huelsbeck 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.

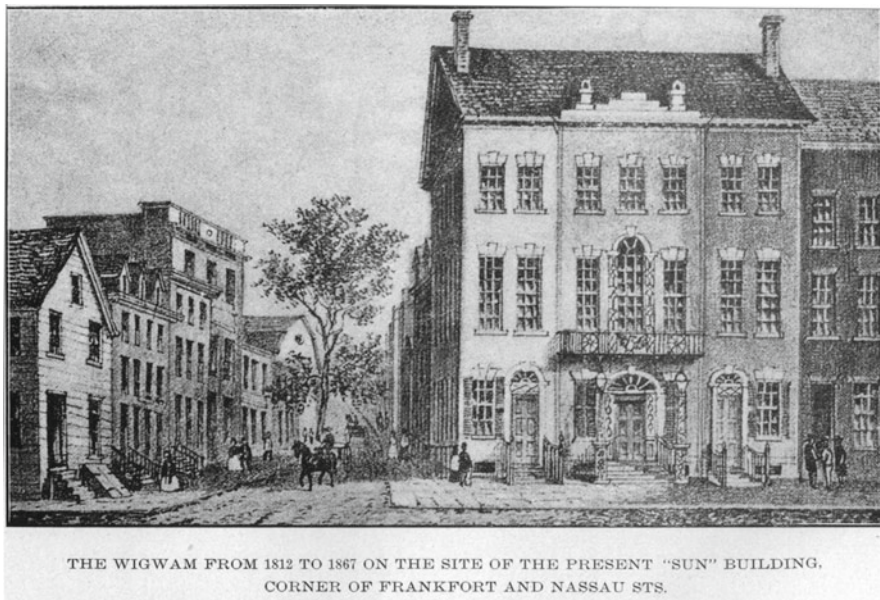
## **Cortland Van Buren, Agent of the Tammany Society**

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, 1788<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>New 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-

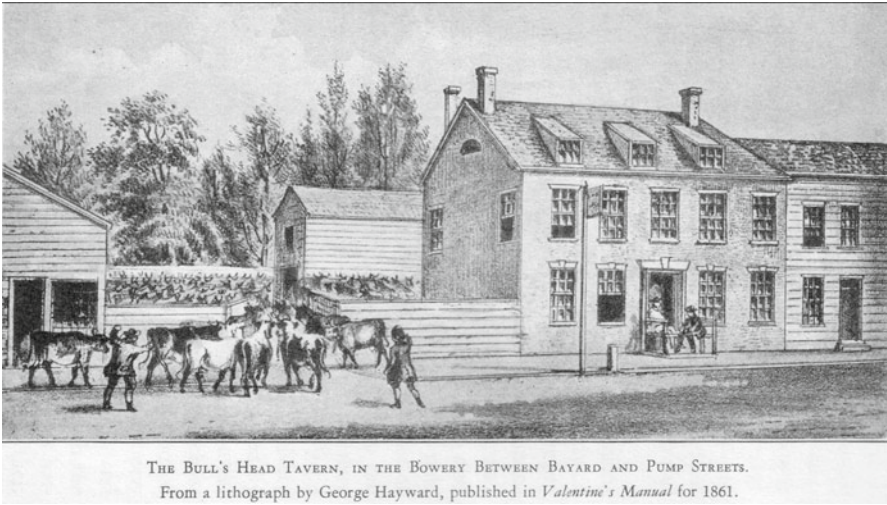


Fig. 16.9 The Bull's Head Tavern. *Valentine's Manual* 1861

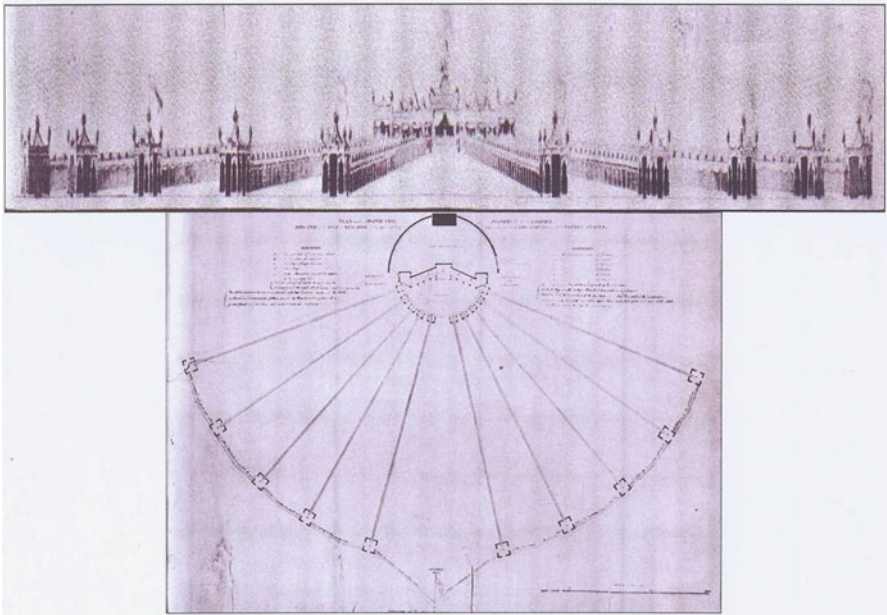


Fig. 16.10 Lafayette Drawing

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.

## References

- Allen, O. E. (1993). *The tiger, the rise and fall of Tammany Hall*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities*. New York: Verso.
- Baughner, S., Lenik, E. J., Amorosi, T., Dallal, D., Guston, J., Plotts, D. A., et al. (1990). *An archaeological investigation of the City Hall Park Site, Manhattan*. Report prepared by the New York City Landmarks Commission for the New York City Department of General Services.

- Binford, L. R. (1965). Archaeological systematics and the study of culture process. *American Antiquity*, 31(2 Pt. 1), 203–210.
- Binford, L. R. (1967). Smudge pits and hide smoking: The use of analogy in archaeological reasoning. *American Antiquity*, 32(1), 1–12.
- Blake, E. V. (1901). *History of the Tammany Society or Columbian Order, from its organization to the present time*. New York: Souvenir Company.
- Brown, G. J., & Bowen, J. (1998). Animal bones from the Cross Street Back Lot Privy. *Historical Archaeology*, 32(3), 72–80.
- De Voe, T. F. (1862). *The market book, A history of the public markets of the city of New York*. New York: August M. Kelley.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geismar, J. H. (1983). *The archaeological investigations of the 175 Water Street Block, New York City*. Report on file with the New York City Landmarks Commission.
- Greenfield, H. J. (1989). From pork to mutton: A zooarchaeological perspective on colonial New Amsterdam and early New York City. *Northeast Historic Archaeology*, 18, 85–110.
- Greenhouse Consultants, Inc. (1985). *The excavation of Augustine Heerman's Warehouse and associated 17th century Dutch West India Company deposits: The broad financial center Mitigation final report*. Report on file at the New York Landmarks Commission.
- Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc. (2003) *Tweed Courthouse archeological survey and data retrieval investigations*. In C. Raensch (Ed.), Prepared for NYC Economic Development Corporation, New York.
- Hodder, I. (1985). Postprocessual archaeology. In M. Schiffer (Ed.), *Advances in archaeological method and theory* (Vol. 8). New York: Academic.
- Hodder, I. (2000). Agency and individuals in long-term processes. In J. E. Robb & M.-A. Dobres (Eds.), *Agency in archaeology* (pp. 21–33). London: Routledge.
- Huelsbeck, D. R. (1989). Zooarchaeological measures revisited. *Historical Archaeology*, 23(1), 113–117.
- Janowitz, M. (1993). Indian corn and Dutch pots: Seventeenth-century foodways in New Amsterdam. *Historical Archaeology*, 27(2), 6–24.
- John Milner Associates, Inc. (2009). 290 Broadway, The African Burial Ground Project. In C. Cheek (Ed.), Prepared for Edwards and Kelsey Engineers, Inc. and General Services Administration, Region 2. Report filed with the New York City Landmarks Commission.
- John Milner Associates, Inc. (2000). *Tales of five points: Working-class life in nineteenth-century New York*. In R. Yamin (Ed.), Prepared for Edwards and Kelsey Engineers, Inc. and General Services Administration, Region 2. Report on file with the New York Landmarks Commission.
- Johnson, A., & Earle, T. (1987). *The evolution of human societies*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kohl, P. L. (1998). Nationalism and archaeology: On the constructions of nations and the reconstructions of the remote past. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 27, 223–246.
- Lamb, M. J. (1880). *History of the city of New York* (Vol. 2). New York: A.S. Barnes & Co.
- Lipe, W., & Hegmon, M. (1989). *The architecture of social integration in prehistoric Pueblos. Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Occasional Paper No.1*. Cortez, Colorado: Crow Canyon Archaeological Center.
- Louis Berger and Associates, Inc. (LBA). (1987). *Druggists, craftsmen, and merchants of Pearl and Water street*. New York: The Barclays Bank Site. Report on file at the New York City Landmarks Commission.
- Louis Berger and Associates, Inc. (LBA). (1991). *Archaeological and historical investigations at the Assay site*, Block 35, New York. Report on file at the New York City Landmarks Commission.
- Louis Berger and Associates, Inc. (LBA). (1997). *Archaeological and historical investigation of the Metropolitan Detention Center site (36PH91)*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In C. LeeDecker (Ed.), Prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Washington, DC.
- Lyman, R. L. (1977). Analysis of historic faunal remains. *Historical Archaeology*, 11, 67–73.

- Newman, S. P. (1997). *Parades and the politics of the street, festive culture in the early American Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Pencak, W., Dennis, M., & Newman, S. P. (Eds.). (2002). *Riot and revelry in early America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Potter, J. M. (1997). Communal ritual and faunal remains: An example from the Dolores Anasazi. *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 24(3), 353–364.
- Rappaport, R. (1968). *Pigs for the ancestors: Ritual in the ecology of a New Guinea people*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Redman, C. L. (1973). Multistage fieldwork and analytical techniques. *American Antiquity*, 38(1), 61–79.
- Reitz, E. J., & Scarry, C. M. (1985). Reconstructing historic subsistence with an example from sixteenth-century Spanish Florida. *Historical Archaeology*, Special Publication Series, Number 3.
- Rockman [Wall], D., Harris, W., & Levin, J. (1983). *The archaeological investigations of the Telco Block*, South Street Seaport Historic District, New York. Report on file with the New York City Landmarks Commission and the National Register of Historic Places.
- Rothschild, N. A. (1990). *New York city neighborhoods: the 18th century*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Rothschild, N. A., Diana diZ. [Rockman] W., & Boesch, E. (1982). *The archaeological investigations of the Stadt Huys Block: A final report*. Report on file with the New York City Landmarks Commission.
- Rothschild, N. A., & Pickman, A. (1978). *The Archaeological investigations of the Seven Hanover Square Site*. Report on file at the New York City Landmarks Commission.
- Ryan, M. (1989). The American parade: Representations of the nineteenth century social order. In L. Hunt (Ed.), *The new cultural history* (pp. 131–153). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Singer, D. A. (1985). The use of fish remains as a socio-economic measure: An example from 19th century New England. *Historical Archaeology*, 19(2), 110–113.
- Skorupski, J. (1976). *Symbol and theory: Philosophical study of theories of religion in social anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Unknown author. (1788). *Daily Patriotic Register*, July 23, 1788.
- Valentine, D.T. (1861) *Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York*. New York: Common Council of New York.
- Waldstreicher, D. (1997). *In the midst of perpetual fetes, the making of American nationalism, 1776–1820*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Watson, R. A. (1991). What the new archaeology has accomplished. *Current Anthropology*, 32(3), 275–291.1 New York City was then the temporary capital of the United States.