THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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From the Editors

As editors of a journal of regional history, one of our greatest privileges is to discover and promote relatively unknown characters of historic significance. So it is with great pleasure that we introduce Tappan-born artist John Quidor and his little-known late works. The balance of this issue features articles adapted from *The Worlds of Andrew Jackson Downing: A Bicentennial Celebration*, hosted by The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College on October 25, 2015. These articles by recognized authorities on Downing and his legacy begin with the nineteenth-century Newburgh context into which America's first great landscape designer was born and conclude with 200 years of perspective on what he accomplished and inspired. We want to recognize David Schuyler, our 2015 Barnabas McHenry Scholar in Residence, for his expertise on the subject and his great efforts in assembling such a distinguished gathering of scholars.

In closing, we're delighted to acknowledge the members of our Editorial Board, who make it possible for us to publish this journal. With this issue we extend our gratitude to departing members Kim Bridgford of West Chester University and Sarah Olson of the National Park Service and welcome Thomas Chambers, Professor of History, Niagara University.

On the cover:
John Quidor, *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* (1849). Oil on canvas.
National Gallery of Art. 39 3/4″ x 49 13/16″

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

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Symposium
The Worlds of Andrew Jackson Downing

Book Reviews

The Course of War: John Quidor, Washington Irving, and the Deployment of Dutch History

Peter Betjemann

Figure 1: See color plate on page 11

The best-known painters associated with the Hudson River Valley are of course primarily landscapists, including Thomas Cole, Asher Durand, Sanford Robinson Gifford, and Frederic Church. Despite having never painted Kaaterskill Falls or a sunrise over the Catskills, however, John Quidor—an eccentric specialist in literary scenes, mostly

Figure 2: See color plate on page 12

drawn from Washington Irving—derived much of his oeuvre from the region. Art historians have long recognized the ways in which such paintings as *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* (1849) and *The Headless Horseman Pursuing Ichabod Crane* (1858) use Irving's legends of the region to push into Gothic psychological registers.[1] Quidor's pictures of Rip Van Winkle's bewilderment (Figure 1) or of Ichabod Crane's terror (Figure 2) capture alienation and anxiety with an intensity that only occasionally penetrates through the enchanted surfaces of the original stories.

There are good reasons, however, not to pigeonhole Quidor as a melodramatic regionalist primarily interested, by way of local legends, in the individual self's experience of terror. As Sarah Burns has shown, his penchant for depicting "black devils and devilish black riders"—as in *The Headless Horseman Pursuing Ichabod Crane*—involves more particular meditations on race, slavery, and rebellion.[2] For Ross Barrett, Quidor's encroaching mobs—easily seen in *The Return of Rip Van Winkle*—relate to the specific histories of rioting, pugnacity, and class conflict in Jacksonian America.[3] More recently, Barrett has also identified how Quidor's financial and personal interests in the land boom in the West (he owned a plot of land in Illinois) inform his painting *The Money Diggers* (1832), a picture nominally set on the banks of the East River but suffused with economic issues involving absentee ownership and speculative forms of value.[4] In the following pages, I aim to advance this line of thinking about Quidor by suggesting how three of his late paintings, linked in both style and subject, are both highly regional and highly resistant to regionalist interpretations. These paintings—*Embarkation from Communipaw* (1861), *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* (c.1861), and *Peter Stuyvesant's Journey Up the Hudson River* (1866)—depict travel on the Hudson River or estuary, and collectively form what Bartholomew Bland describes as a "group of marine paintings" with the "same golden tones, storybook quality, and makeshift seventeenth-century boats."[5] They belong to a number of paintings after Irving's *History of New-York* (1809) that Quidor, who lived until 1881, completed in the 1860s before abruptly abandoning his brush.

1 See Bryan Wolf, *Romantic Re-Vision: Culture and Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century American Painting and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 107-173.

2 Sarah Burns, *Painting the Dark Side: Art and the Gothic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 126.

3 Ross Barrett, *Rendering Violence: Riots, Strikes, and Upheaval in Nineteenth-Century American Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 37-45.

4 Barrett, "Bursting the Bubble: John Quidor's *Money Diggers* and Land Speculation," *American Art* 30:1 (Spring 2016), 28-51.

5 Bartholomew F. Bland, "Imagining Dutch New York: John Quidor and the Romantic Tradition," in *Dutch New York: The Roots of Hudson Valley Culture*, ed. Roger Panetta (Yonkers: Hudson River Museum/Fordham University Press, 2009), 248-249.

And they all, I believe, have particular significance because their imagery of sailing on the Hudson types what Quidor had done, imaginatively, his whole career. Through Irving's texts, Quidor moved up and down and the valley, offering an entirely different perspective of its geography than the more famous artists associated with the Hudson River School. The 1860s paintings thus appear as late, self-reflexive commentaries on the artist's idiosyncratic view of a region more successfully—at least from the point of view of elite taste—represented by views of luminous sunlight, mountain peaks, and the sublimity of the river and its tributaries. More pointedly than anything in his oeuvre, *Embarkation from Communipaw, Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* and *Peter Stuyvesant's Journey Up the Hudson River* break with emerging landscape conventions and with the parochialism of their own narratives in order to redraw the boundaries of what a Hudson River painting meant: Pulling away from the legendary aspects of the region (even as he was painting from a book by Irving that helped establish those legends), Quidor establishes the meaning of his apparently hyper-local paintings on a quite different scale.

Figure 3: See color plate on page 13

Matters of scale, in fact, inform these paintings at first glance. For they initially seem rather to contract into more minute corners of Irving's regional history than, as I am going to argue they also do, to expand into recognizable national registers or to relate to larger issues of the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, all three paintings turn to comparatively incidental scenes in *History of New-York*. In the two 1861 paintings (Figures 3 and 4), Quidor depicts the voyage of a party of expeditioners from the original Dutch settlement at Communipaw toward Manhattan island, although neither painting shows the actual landing. In 1866 (Figure 5), Quidor portrays a journey taken by Peter Stuyvesant up the Hudson, later in the history of New Amsterdam, to recruit an army for a campaign against the Swedish settlers in the lower reaches of the Delaware River. Like all of Quidor's work completed between 1861 and 1866, when he ceased painting, these compositions are considerably less vivid than his earlier work, represented in this article by *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* and *The Headless Horseman Pursuing Ichabod Crane* but also including, for instance, *Rip Van Winkle and His Companions at the Inn Door of Nicholas Vedder* (1839), *A Battle Scene from Knickerbocker's History of New York* (1838),

Figure 4: See color plate on page 14

Figure 5: See color plate on page 15

Antony Van Corlear Brought Into the Presence of Peter Stuyvesant (1839), and *Tom Walker's Flight* (c.1856). The earlier paintings almost always focus on one or two medium to large figures, usually at a climactic moment in the narrative. Ichabod flees in terror from Brom Bones at the instant he hurls the pumpkin; Rip, having just returned from the long sleep spanning the Revolutionary War, confronts the angry mob outraged by the loyalty he expresses to King George. The 1860s paintings pull back from such close focus on central characters filling much of the canvas. The most dramatic work of the late oeuvre is certainly *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw*. But even that picture drastically reduces the scale of the figures and places a minor character—Oloffe Van Kortlandt, the leader of the Communipaw expedition—at the center. Other paintings from the 1860s focus on humorous anecdotes, such as Irving's descriptions of early Dutch storytelling around the hearth (*A Knickerbocker Kitchen*, 1865) or of a Dutch meal (*A Knickerbocker Tea-Party*, 1866). As he downscales the characters and places greater emphasis on landscape, atmospheric conditions, and domestic settings, Quidor also begins to use thinner brush strokes and to paint many of the secondary figures sketchily, almost as if by pencil. (The sailors on the boats to the right and left of the main vessel in *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* offer particularly good examples.) But perhaps the most dramatic adjustment of the 1860s involves color. Quidor radically desaturated his palette, relying on tonally similar shades of yellow, brown, and orange. Over these paints, as Bland describes, he applied a series darkening glazes to the finished canvases, meaning that the late pictures appear largely monochromatic and prematurely aged.[6] Collectively, these changes deemphasize closely interpersonal drama, the origin of most of the emotional and pictorial vividness of Quidor's early paintings. Given his abrupt shift towards more obscure subjects, a washed-out palette, and sketchier characters, it may not be surprising that few art historians have shown any interest in Quidor's late oeuvre.

The contractions I have described make the paintings seem, on the one hand, particularly parochial; they challenge the viewer to descry a narrative that includes many characters from a visual field that tends to absorb the details. On the other hand, pulling back the view also presents Quidor with new opportunities for using vaster reaches of geography to carry the significance of the scene. Consider, to begin, *Embarkation from Communipaw*. The picture, based on an episode in Book Two of *History of New-York*, shows the first wave of Dutch settlers departing their original settlement at

6 Bland, "Imagining Dutch New York," 247-248.

Figure 6: See color plate on page 16

Communipaw—part of present-day Jersey City, close to Liberty and Ellis islands—on the voyage to settle Manhattan. The opening on the horizon suggests that we are looking south, towards the Verrazano Narrows. No other perspective from Communipaw presents a similar gap in the coastline, and the shadows cast by the people's legs, placing the sun off the left-front corner of the picture, furthers the supposition (Figure 6). Irving, borrowing language from the *Odyssey* for his mock-heroic narrative, emphasizes that the Dutch board their boats near dawn, as the "rosy blush of dawn began to mantle in the east" and "the first rays of Phoebus dart into the windows."[7] The lines of shadow in Quidor's painting thus establish the east clearly, with the gap on the horizon—directly perpendicular to those lines—therefore fixed in the south, toward the narrows. The near-shore landmasses (one crossed with the ship's mast and the other to its right) are located in the approximate positions of Ellis and Liberty islands; their rough and jagged aspect, stippled with bright paint, could allude either to the fact that these islands were once oyster beds (called *oester eilanden*, the Oyster Islands, by the first Dutch settlers) or to Irving's outlandish tale about how they formed from rocky outcroppings of the Hudson Highlands that broke off in a flood. Quidor knew the coast of New Jersey well. He was born in Tappan, and two of his three children lived in Jersey City. Quidor himself moved there, from Manhattan, after he stopped painting.[8]

The southerly perspective provides the clue to the painting's occasion. In spring of 1861, the word "embarkation" appeared everywhere in the news; in the May 4 issues of *Harper's Weekly* alone, three separate images showed such subjects as "The Boston Regiments Embarking for Washington in the Jersey City Cars," "The Seventh Regiment Marching Down Broadway to Embark for the War," and "Parade of Troops on Governor's Island Before Embarkation" (Figure 7). *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News* featured such pictures as "The German Regiment…Previous to Embarking for the Seat of War" and a slew of images with related titles that emphasized regiments "leaving," "landing," or, in parade, "passing" certain landmarks and street corners.[9] What *Leslie's* called the "war excitement," as the first regiments of volunteer soldiers formed throughout the Northeast, was dominated by news and images of preparations and departures, with periodicals including columns devoted to the "movement of troops" and illustrations showing all manner of mobilization.[10] "Every town," writes W. Fletcher Thompson, "dispatched its regiments

7 Washington Irving, *History of New York* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1860), 109-110.
8 Quidor's biography has been charted by Christopher Wilson, "The Life and Work of John Quidor" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1982) and David Sokol, "John Quidor: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., New York University, 1971).
9 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* May 4, 11, and 24, 1861.
10 "The War Excitement in the City," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 4, 1861, 387.

Figure 7: "The Sixty-Ninth (Irish) Regiment Embarking in the 'James Adger' for the War, April 23, 1861." ***Harper's Weekly,*** **May 11, 1861: 298**

with an orgy of speeches, flag presentations, and long parades down Main Street. Artists and photographers recorded many of these scenes for the rest of the nation."[11] If embarkation dominated the popular visual culture in the Union states in the spring of 1861, it also gives significance to the point of view in Quidor's painting. Geographically oriented to the south, rather than to the east (the actual direction of the early Dutch settlers embarking from Communipaw), the view draws the eye in the direction that the first militias of Union troops were in fact flowing. (Pointed as they are, the boats reinforce the painting's suggestion that the gap on the horizon represents the direction of travel.) Quidor, moreover, had an even more personal connection with the drama of embarking, southward, from Jersey City. His son who resided there, John Edwin Quidor, volunteered with the first round of regiments organized after the declaration of war. Mustering with the 2nd New Jersey in April of 1861 and traveling south to join McDowell's Army of Northeast Virginia, the younger Quidor literally embarked from Communipaw in the year that his father painted *Embarkation from Communipaw*.[12]

The painting thus suggests a much larger landscape—that of the sectional conflict and the Civil War—than its scene of ostensibly local interest. The view across the Hudson, where the Dutchmen in Irving's story were traveling, is replaced by a view to the south and by a subject that implicitly belongs to 1861 as much as, explicitly, to the early history of New Amsterdam. Such transposition characterizes U.S. painting of

11 W. Fletcher Thompson, Jr., *The Image of War: The Pictorial Reporting of the American Civil War* (New York and London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), 29.

12 William Stryker, *Records of Officers and Men in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Trenton, NJ: John Murphy, 1876), 28.

the 1860s. As art historians have documented, explicit subject matter drawn from the Civil War rarely appealed to nineteenth-century artists, their patrons or, later, collectors and curators. For one, the massive volume of battle imagery in the popular papers and the shock of photographs depicting corpse-strewn battlefields tended to drive fine artists away from similarly frank subjects; painters understandably had little desire to present works for the parlor that recalled the painful scenes visible at the newsstand, in the photograph galleries, and, as wounded soldiers returned from the front, on the streets.[13] For two, the gruesome immediacy of the war's visual impact, so unlike prior conflicts, precipitated what Steven Conn and Andrew Walker have described as a "crisis of representation" for history painting itself.[14] The classical order of grand-manner military scenes in the style of Benjamin West or Emanuel Leutze—traditionally featuring a pyramidal composition of figures centering the eye on a heroic and often gentlemanly leader, as in Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851)—depended on a narrative clarity unavailable during a war in which the bodies of everyday soldiers were so insistently visible to the people.[15]

Rather than climactic or iconic scenes, therefore, artists who did paint the war tended to focus on everyday soldiers (Winslow Homer's *Sharpshooter* [1863], for instance) or on narrative moments within the flow of war rather than grandly emblematic of it (Homer's *Prisoners from the Front* [1866], Gifford's *Bivouac of the Seventh Regiment* [1861]).[16] But most established artists did not paint the war at all. The relationship of Civil War-era painting to the Civil War itself instead tends to appear metaphoric, elliptical, and oblique. Eleanor Harvey's *The Civil War and American Art* details a wide variety of common tropes in 1860s landscape painting: approaching storms, meteor showers, icebergs, and volcanoes all served as common referents for the conflict. That these referents were specific rather than general emerges from Harvey's close historical analysis. Frederic Church's *Cotopaxi* (1862) draws particular features of its volcanic imagery from abolitionist textual discourse. Church's retitling of his painting *The Icebergs* (1861) as *The North* invites viewers to meditate on its engagement with the polarization of North and South. Jasper Cropsey's *Richmond Hill in the Summer of 1862* (1862-63) depicts London's Richmond Hill but makes various iconographical references to wartime Richmond, Virginia.[17] Other scholars find similar layers of reference in other pictorial genres. Alfred Bierstadt's *Mountain Brook* (1863), an interior forest scene, has been discussed as a Civil War picture, in large part due to the presence of a kingfisher at the center of the image. As John James Audubon stressed, the kingfisher's range connected South with North, hinting at a narrative about the end of the war that other compositional elements of

13 See Eleanor Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art* (Smithsonian Museum of American Art/Yale University Press, 2012), 17-72; Diane Dillon, "Nature, Nurture, Nation: Appetites for Apples and Autumn During the Civil War," in Brownlee, Peter John et al., *Home Front: Daily Life in the Civil War North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 130.

14 Steven Conn and Andrew Walker, "The History in the Art: Painting the Civil War," in *Terrain of Freedom: American Art and Civil War*, special issue of *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 27:1 (2001), 63.

15 See Conn and Walker, 60-71.

16 On *Prisoners from the Front* as a painting that abjures climactic action, see Conn and Walker, 80.

17 All of these examples are discussed in Harvey, 17-72.

Mountain Brook also suggest; the fact that *Harper's* published an image, in 1862, of the USS *Kingfisher* rescuing escaped slaves off the coast of Florida furthers the intimation of Union triumph embodied in the detail of the bird.[18] In still life—perhaps the most improbable military genre—William Sidney Mount's *Fruit Piece: Apples on Tin Cups* (1864) emerges as a war piece when interpreted by Diane Dillon, who reads the apples as iconic produce of a Northern landscape connected to the conflict by way of the tin cups, essential elements of a soldier's kit while campaigning in the South or West, and by the fact that the painting was sold at a benefit for the Union army.[19]

I am struck, in many of these examples, by their orientation to cardinal points. Dillon's description of *Fruit Piece* as "casting distinctively *Northern* landscapes as *national* scenery" (original emphasis) stresses the geographical transpositions of one place into another, a pattern that also defines Quidor's orientation of his 1861 embarkation scene to the southerly view of the Verrazano Narrows, rather than to the easterly reaches of New York Harbor as described by Irving.[20] As I will unfold in the following pages, however, Quidor's paintings of the 1860s also channel an unusually skeptical view of the Union army's prospects through particularly vertiginous geographies. The regionalism of Civil War-era paintings like *Mountain Brook*, *The Icebergs*, and *Fruit Piece* operates through synecdoche: a Northern landscape stands for the larger geography of conflict. Quidor's paintings also instantiate the oblique presence of the Civil War in 1860s fine art, but they do so less by presenting one regional geography as a way of invoking another than by invoking the fear, danger, and confusion associated with movement itself, as embarking troops, armies on the move, and individual soldiers

Figure 8: "Extraordinary Scene in Tammany Hall. Col. Wm Wilson's Zouaves Swearing to be True to the Stars and Stripes and to Go Through Baltimore or Die," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* May 4, 1861: 396

18 See Angela Miller, "Albert Bierstadt, Landscape Aesthetics, and the Meaning of the West in the Civil War Era," in *Terrain of Freedom*, 41-44, as well as Conn and Walker, 77-79.
19 Dillon, "Nature, Nurture, Nation," 133-139.
20 Ibid., 129.

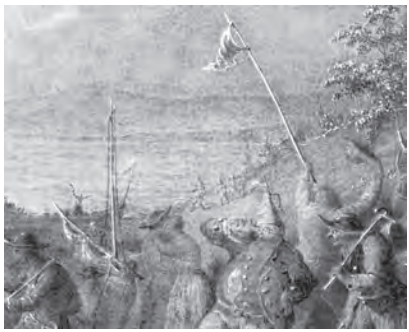

Figure 9: See color plate on page 16

mustered into conflict. The geographical re-scaling of Quidor's paintings, to put this pattern another way, registers the hardships and commotion of North-to-South transpositions in a way that Bierstadt's kingfisher or Mount's still life never could. In *Embarkation from Communipaw*, the southerly re-orientation of the embarkation is matched by a decidedly satirical view of the expedition's prospects. Quidor's army is being convened with all manner of propagandistic efforts, undoubtedly inspired by the large corpus of imagery devoted to the recruitment and rallying of what was, until 1863, a volunteer army (Figure 8). Oloffe Van Kortlandt blows upon his conch shell. The man just behind him gesticulates enthusiastically to the flag he carries (Figure 9). A sailor on a boat in the distance waves a pennant or cloth, urging a more distant line of men toward his vessel (see Figure 6). An attitude of insouciance—or even frank drunkenness—defines the scene, almost certainly meant to parody the high-spirited tone of early embarkation news and imagery, the widespread belief that the Confederacy would be quickly and painlessly defeated, and the reckless enthusiasm for battle that produced a surge of volunteers in the spring and summer of 1861.[21] Such confidence, of course, shattered with the rout of the Union forces at Bull Run in July—a shift in emotional tenor that helps explain *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw,* which, as the next episode in the narrative sequence, Quidor undoubtedly intended as a pendant for *Embarkation for Communipaw*. The painting of the fate of Van Kortlandt's expedition also approaches the conflict elliptically, using Irving's Dutch narrative to suggest the environment in which Quidor was actually working. But *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* rescales and reorients the legends spun by Irving even more fully, drastically revising the original narrative in order to encode the movements of the Union army in the first year of the Civil War.

Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw is a geographically bewildering painting. In Irving's text, the expeditioners depart from Communipaw, ascend the East River (passing to the west of what is now Roosevelt Island), and find themselves sucked on an incoming tide into the notorious rocks and eddies that—prior to being demolished in the late nineteenth century—separated Randall's Island and Queens and were known as the Hell Gate. Dashed on the shore of what would become Astoria, the Dutchmen lay over for one night and ride the outgoing tide back down the river the next day, finally landing at the tip of Manhattan. In Quidor's painting, one boat has fully foundered,

21 On the stark different between mid-1861 and 1862 in recruiting efforts in New York, see Michael McAfee, "The Sons of Friends and Neighbors: Orange County's 56th and 124th Regiments of New York Volunteer Infantry," *Hudson River Valley Review* 22:1 (Fall 2005).

Figure 1: John Quidor. American, 1801-1881. *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* (1849). Oil on canvas. 39.75 in. x 49.81 in. National Gallery of Art. Andrew W. Mellon Collection 1942.8.10

Figure 2: John Quidor, *Headless Horseman Pursuing Ichabod Crane* (1858). Oil on canvas. 26.9 in. x 34 in. Smithsonian Museum of American Art. Museum purchase made possible in part by the Catherine Walden Myer Endowment, the Julia D. Strong Endowment, and the Director's Discretionary Fund. 1994.120

Figure 3: John Quidor. *Embarkation from Communipaw* (1861). Oil on canvas. 35 in. x 43 in. Detroit Institute of Arts, USA / Founders Society purchase, General Membership Fund / Bridgeman Images

Figure 4: John Quidor, *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* (c.1861). Oil on canvas. 27 in. x 34 in. Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, Kansas. Roland P. Murdock Collection. M115.53

Figure 5: John Quidor. *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage up the Hudson River* (1866). Oil on canvas. 27 in. x 34 in. Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, MA, USA. Gift of Herbert W. Plimpton: The Hollis W. Plimpton, Class of 1915, Memorial Collection. Bridgeman Images

Figure 6: Detail, John Quidor, *Embarkation from Communipaw* (1861). Oil on canvas. Detroit Institute of Arts, USA / Founders Society purchase, General Membership Fund / Bridgeman Images

Figure 9: Detail, John Quidor, *Embarkation from Communipaw* (1861). Oil on canvas. Detroit Institute of Arts, USA / Founders Society purchase, General Membership Fund / Bridgeman Images

Figure 10: Sanford Robinson Gifford. American, 1823-1880. ***Sunset on the Hudson*** **(1876). Oil on canvas, 9 x 15.94 in. (22.86 x 40.48 cm). Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1958.151**

Figure 12: Detail, John Quidor, *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage Up the Hudson*. Oil on canvas. Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, MA, USA. Gift of Herbert W. Plimpton: The Hollis W. Plimpton, Class of 1915, Memorial Collection. Bridgeman Images

Figure 13: Detail, John Quidor, *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage Up the Hudson*. Oil on canvas. Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, MA, USA. Gift of Herbert W. Plimpton: The Hollis W. Plimpton, Class of 1915, Memorial Collection. Bridgeman Images

on the right; the central vessel, commanded by Van Kortlandt, is about to impact a rock broadside. The boats are clearly being carried from right to left by both wind and current, which either places the foundering at Hell Gate on the opposite shore (the Randall's Island, not the Astoria, side), or else reverses the direction of the tide. The horizon does not help orient the viewer: Nothing in the vicinity of Hell Gate has the look of the high cliff to the left of the sail. Quidor also abandons his customary faithfulness to Irving's text in his depiction of the land. For Irving, the "Circean shores" possess a "character of gentleness and mild fertility" marked by verdant slopes and sunny vistas.[22] For Quidor, the shore is every bit as inhospitable as the river. *Embarkation from Communipaw*, I have argued, swings the perspective to the south but maintains features recognizable as those around, or visible from, Jersey City. Why would Quidor transform the geography of *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* so much more fully?

One answer lies in the relationship of the viewer to the two paintings. *Embarkation from Communipaw* and *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* obviously show somewhat different locations, but the perspective and the framing—trees on either side, low swale in front, outcropping on the left—are so similar that the second picture in the sequence retains the orientation of the viewer's eye, implying that the voyagers have barely travelled offshore. Certainly the lurching voyagers in *Embarkation from Communipaw* would not have made very capable mariners. Placing the paintings in narrative sequence makes *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* feel less like an actual migration, as described in the title, than like a representation of a voyage doomed from the beginning by the incapability of the crew and the building severity of the conditions. Most important, if the horizon appears topologically confusing when read against Irving's text, it is clearly recognizable if we abandon that story—which moves up the East River—and stick to the geography of the lower Hudson River and New York Bay. We look north, upriver although on an incoming tide, at the Palisades on the left and Washington Heights on the right; Sanford Robinson Gifford's *Sunset Over the Palisades on the Hudson* (Figure 10) shows the same perspective. Transposing the action from the geography of Hell Gate, as carefully described over several pages by Irving, Quidor keeps the viewer oriented to the waterbody of the *Embarkation* picture—the west bank of the lower Hudson estuary—but rotates the perspective so that we are looking north rather than south. If the first painting, as I have suggested, owes its theme and its title to the ubiquitous representation of embarkation for the South—in virtually every newspaper, on a daily basis, as vol-

Figure 10: See color plate on page 17

22 Irving, *History of New York*, 117.

unteer militias departed throughout the spring of 1861—the second painting, reversing direction, casts a geographically doubtful eye on those campaigns. We do not know if Quidor painted the picture (or, for that matter, *Embarkation from Communipaw*) before or after the shocking defeat at Bull Run. But the narrative of an expeditionary force driven back north—precisely like the Union forces in July—is clearly established by the pictorial and topologic suggestions that the Van Kortlandt expedition has barely moved before foundering.

Another detail from Irving's text helps draw out the scale on which Quidor is working. *History of New-York* is quite specific about the vessel from which Van Kortlandt commands the expedition: "a little round Dutch boat, shaped not unlike a tub, which had formerly been the jolly boat of the *Goede Vrouw*." The *Goede Vrouw*, in Irving's narrative, was the name of the ship on which the original settlers of New Amsterdam arrived.[23] In the painting, the words *Goede Vrouw* appears on the stern, one on each side of the rudder. A tender, of course, might be emblazoned with the name of the main ship. But by doing so, and by placing the name so prominently, Quidor invokes the transatlantic migration that brought the Dutch to the region, in the *Goede Vrouw*, in the first place. (In actual fact, many Dutch ships, not just the one imagined by Irving, began arriving in the early 1620s.) To make the same point from the perspective of the viewer, the name *Goede Vrouw*, located in the center of the painting, presents the action as a representation not just of the haplessness of Van Kortlandt's crew, but as an allegory for the fate of the Dutch in New York and the Hudson River Valley. Again, Quidor invites us to see the specific action of the painting as representative of larger movements and migrations. The picture thus adjusts the scale from a secondary expedition staged in a jollyboat and a couple of canoes to a representation of the primal national scene as embodied by the *Goede Vrouw* herself; in short, we are looking at an allegorical representation of America's fate. In that allegory, no verdant and peaceful shore, as described by Irving, awaits those who escape the tumultuous river. The *Goede Vrouw* is being swept abeam toward a sharp rock, which looks like it is about to cleave the boat in two. In the series of allegories that Quidor creates, connecting different times and spaces, the nation—its hopes in the South reversed and repulsed only moments after embarking—is about to come to wreck.

Given all this, my guess is that Quidor painted the second picture (or both of them) after Bull Run. But whether anticipatory or reactionary, satirical or based on the known rout and disorganized retreat of the army in Virginia, the two works suggest the metaphorical content of 1860s paintings of volcanoes, meteor showers, and thunderstorms—paintings in which, to borrow a idea from Eleanor Harvey, "apocalyptic… meteorology" allegorizes the riven nation.[24] In using Irving's narrative to focus on actual individuals conducting a campaign, however, Quidor's paintings of embarkation and movement also relate more specifically to the troops themselves. Just as *Embarkation*

23 Ibid., 94.
24 Harvey, 3.

Figure 11: "Explosion of a Shell, From the Rebel Steamer Ivy, in the Cutter of the U.S. War Steamer Niagara" ***Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,*** **December 14, 1861: 49**

from Communipaw originated in popular imagery of embarkation in the spring of 1861, as proud New Yorkers turned out to watch the city's regiments march down the avenues and take passage for the war, *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw* echoes imagery that began to emerge later that year. By late 1861, naval and army engagements began to produce illustrations of ships capsizing, sailors drowning, armies fighting, and soldiers dying. Van Kortlandt's very strange posture, in the second painting, indeed becomes more legible in a military context. Arms raised in the universal sign of military surrender, his posture also mirrors one that started to appear all too commonly in the illustrated papers: that of the soldier or sailor hit by a bullet or a shell (Figure 11). A great bolt of lightning bisects the sky in *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw,* anticipating the imminent shivering of Van Kortlandt's vessel as it is swept broadside into the sharp rock. Quidor, we might say, paints telescopically. He transforms the jollyboat of the *Goede Vrouw* into the *Goede Vrouw* herself; he associates an expedition of a few miles with the movements and fates of Union soldiers on the Eastern Seaboard in 1861; and he uses a local legend to represent a nation divided. In fact, his established predilection for painting Irving's Dutch characters became almost frighteningly appropriate given the ethnic constitution of the actual regiment from Communipaw—his son's, the 2nd New Jersey—that Quidor intended these paintings to invoke. The younger Quidor, a surgeon, mustered alongside living men—including Quartermaster John Brinkerhoff, Major

Figure 12: See color plate on page 18

John J. VanBuskirk, Adjutant Cornelius VanRiepen, First Lieutenant Benjamin VanRiper, and Privates John and Jacob Van Winkle—whose names populated Irving's texts.[25] A Brinkerhoff appears as the leader of an expeditionary force in *History of New-York*. A Van Riper loans the horse named Gunpowder to Ichabod Crane in "Legend of Sleepy Hollow." A Van Winkle, of course, became Irving's most famous character. To be sure, there is nothing surprising about the number of Dutch names in the 2nd New Jersey. But the regiment's roster deepens the sense of occasion for the Communipaw paintings: the actual departure of men from the same city who would have been known to the elder Quidor as later-day descendants of the voyagers he excavated from Irving's text.

The common understanding of Quidor as a painter of local legends—most of them associated with the Hudson River—thus tends to obscure the degree to which he used the region as a microcosm for larger reaches of time and space. Burns and Barrett have shown how certain of Quidor's antebellum paintings are far less parochial than they seem. But his Civil War-era paintings, pulling back from the interactions of two or three characters in favor of views that mix narrative with landscape, offer particularly open invitations to expand the scale of Irving's narratives. Indeed, the most potent vision of a landscape inflected (and affected) by the experience of the Union army in the Civil War appears in what may have been the last painting after Irving produced by Quidor, *Peter Stuyvesant's Journey Up the Hudson*.[26] The picture shows the episode that, according to Irving, resulted in the naming of Anthony's Nose, the promontory on the east bank of the Hudson at the point where the Bear Mountain Bridge now spans the river. The legend is absurd: at this point, Irving writes, a sunbeam struck the large nose

Figure 13: See color plate on page 18

25 See Stryker, *Records of Officers and Men in the Civil War, 1861-1865*, 28-39.

26 Another painting dated 1866, *A Knickerbocker Tea-Party*, relates so closely to a painting dated 1865, *A Knickerbocker Kitchen*, that it seems likely—although the speculation is unverifiable—to predate *Peter Stuyesant's Voyage Up the Hudson*. Some sources describe *The Trumpeter and Peter Stuyvesant* (1869; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts) as a Quidor, but the painting bears little stylistic resemblance to an original by the artist; the acquisitions file on this painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts contains an appraisal casting doubt on the attribution the work. The Neuberger Museum of Art at SUNY-Purchase owns an 1867 painting by Quidor, *A Tavern Scene*, but the picture has no recognizable source in Irving.

of Stuyvesant's trumpeter Antony Van Corlear and, reflecting into the water, killed a sturgeon swimming alongside the boat.

Recognizable by the trumpet he clutches, Anthony appears in Quidor's painting at the front of the boat, leaning over the gunwale. The area of bright light at the waterline represents the reflection that kills the sturgeon, whose arched body, outside of the water, mirrors the curvature of the keel (in a more or less vertical direction) at the bow (Figure 12). In the original text, the sturgeon is "sporting beside the vessel"; in Quidor's painting, the sturgeon looks as if it is being run over, its curved form reflecting its death throes as the sunbeam penetrates its flesh (there is a red hole in its head) and as, to all appearances, the boat runs it down.[27] Irving's humorous story thus takes a more violent turn in Quidor's painting. At the top of the picture, three geese from a larger formation plummet vertically towards the ship, directly alongside the mast. They have been shot by a man near the boat's stern; his upraised firearm, with flames coming from the muzzle, appears between the masts and reaches nearly to the midpoint of the aft sail. Like the sturgeon, whose expiring form mirrors the shape of the keel, the geese trace the lines of the vessel itself. One of the geese drops exactly parallel to the mast, its single outstretched wing forming an "L" tightly framed by the same shape as formed by the mast and yard (Figure 13). Both wings are outstretched on the uppermost plummeting goose, mirroring the perpendicular crossings of the yards on both masts, while the sinuous curvature of the goose to the left of the mainmast closely reflects the arc in the line carrying the flag. The effect of establishing such contiguity between ship, geese, and sturgeon is the same as the effect of the long streamer that billows towards shore from the mainmast, almost touching the branch that carries the same visual line to the ground. All of these details wrap death around Stuyvesant's vessel, defining it by close association with the shapes of dead birds, a dead fish, and a dead tree. It is little wonder that the deer on the left cliff and the figures in the canoe in front of the boat are fleeing, or that the additional Native Americans on the high promontory to the right (recognizable not just because the area's original inhabitants are mentioned in Irving's text, but also by their dress) are posed in belligerent attitudes. The sun rises with ominous red intensity over that promontory—in fact Anthony's Nose—as the figure to the left of the one standing angrily points a bow and arrow at the ship. Perhaps most strikingly, Quidor denudes the landscape of live trees. The wooded area around Bear Mountain and Anthony's Nose looks barren, inhospitable, and exposed.

This painting is linked to the ones set in the lower Hudson estuary by the amber and yellow palette, by the theme of the voyage, by its resistance to the sublimity of Hudson River School painting, and, I want to suggest in closing, by its association with the Civil War army. To be sure, *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage Up the Hudson* can be read as a critique of the foundation myth, with the ship bringing death and conflict into a supposedly undiscovered country. (Christopher Wilson, whose dissertation on Quidor

27 Irving, *History of New York*, 347.

Figure 14: William Heath. British, 1795-1840. *Peter Stuyvesant's Army Entering New Amsterdam* (1850). Sarony & Major, lithographers. 12.5 in. x 30 in. Collection of the Museum of the City of New York. 44.127

remains the only full-length work on the artist, identifies the vessel as a Dutch galliot, recognizable in part by the leeboard on the starboard side. But the ship also bears some resemblance to the two smaller caravels, the *Niña* and *Pinta*, used by Columbus.) At the same time, the occasion for the voyage, as detailed in Irving's text, also associates the picture—like *Embarkation from Communipaw* and *Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw*—with the artist's own era. Stuyvesant sails up the Hudson in order to recruit men for an army he wishes to send south, to attack Fort Casimir, the stronghold of New Sweden (now New Castle, Delaware). This recruiting voyage captured other imaginations in the nineteenth century: in 1838, Augustus del Orient Browere's *Recruiting Peter Stuvyesant's Army for the Recapture of Fort Casimir* showed a town scene, packed with people; Anthony Van Corlear appears in an amorous embrace with one of the local women (as he does throughout Irving's narrative), while Stuyvesant, astride a horse, moves commandingly through the masses. In the *History of New-York*, Stuyvesant's voyage up the Hudson, "arousing all the phlegmatic little Dutch settlements upon its boarders," meets with spectacular success. From the Bronx come the Van Brummels. From Kaatskill, the Van Vlotens. From Esopus, the Van Pelts. Kinderhook musters out the Van Nests, Wapping's Creek the Van Higginbottoms, Anthony's Nose (the site of the painting) the Van Grolls, Hudson the Gardeniers, Sing-Sing the Van Hoesens, Sleepy Hollow the Counhovens, Croton the Van Courtlandts, Nyack the Bunschotens, and Scaghtikoke—far up the river, near Troy—the Knickerbockers. This "formidable

army…mustered along the banks of the Hudson" was itself the subject of an engraving in a long format (eleven by twenty-nine inches) produced by William Heath in 1850. Heath's work showed the men of all the Dutch families marching to New Amsterdam under their various standards, whether flags bearing the names of their cities or iconic objects signifying their lineages (Figure 14).

The contrast between the massive army depicted by Browere, Irving, and Heath and the starkly barren landscape of Quidor's painting—associated not with the optimism of mustering in, but with intimations of death and destruction—could not be stronger. To be fair, Irving's description of the voyage does contain some language of fearful isolation that undoubtedly inspired Quidor: Twilight brings Stuyvesant's men to fancy the encroachment of "barren rocks" and "trees [that] assumed the direful forms of mighty giants." But *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage Up the Hudson* evacuates all hope of successful recruitment of a Dutch army by associating the action with an exploration of a landscape apparently undiscovered by Europeans—there is no hint of anybody to recruit in the painting—and by stressing destruction rather than triumph. Quidor, in fact, saw the crisis of military volunteerism in the 1860s at close hand. His studio at 273 West 43rd Street was near the epicenter of the Draft Riots of 1863, when the first conscription lottery in New York spurred several days of rioting and a horrific series of assaults on African-Americans.[28] *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage Up the Hudson*, connected in style and theme to the Hudson estuary paintings I have already discussed, concludes the historical—not just the literary—narrative established by those paintings. That

28 On Quidor's proximity to the draft riots, see Wilson, "The Life and Work of John Quidor," 202.

Figure 15: *"Howlett's (Rebel) Battery, on the James River, Va. – Shelling Our Monitors, and the Laborers on the Dutch Gap Canal,"* Frank Leslie's Illustrated News, November 19, 1864: 132

narrative begins with the embarkation at Communipaw, moves ahead to cast doubt on the early prospects of the campaign when the *Goede Vrouw* founders, and concludes with a picture that reverses the energetic recruitment and hopeful deployment depicted in the first painting.

As in the 1861 works, moreover, Quidor turns to a highly local legend pertaining to the Hudson—the naming of Anthony's Nose—to invoke a vaster geography. The red hole in the sturgeon's head, which looks like a bullet wound, begins to tell the story. By the end of the war, viewers had become familiar with a Civil War environment defined by the same features as Quidor's painting. Photographs of the war by Matthew Brady, Alexander Gardner, James Gibson, George Barnard, Timothy O'Sullivan, and others showed desolate fields, denuded landscapes, blasted environments, and what O'Sullivan famously called, in the title to one of his photographs of the dead, a "harvest of death"—a phrase that resonates with the depiction of Stuyvesant's ship as the agent of killing and destruction. Photographs, narrative descriptions, and sketches by embedded artists taken on site and published in the illustrated newspapers all meant that, as Megan Kate Nelson puts it, "the obliteration of cities, houses, trees, and men was a shared experience during the Civil War; between 1861 and 1865, almost every soldier or civilian encountered the fragments of war in some form."[29] The strikingly barren hills around Anthony's Nose in *Peter Stuyvesant's Journey Up the Hudson* are atypical not just of the region, but of the dense and tangled vegetation characteristic of Quidor's prior oeuvre. During the Civil War, Quidor would have encountered

29 Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 3.

many images of austere landscapes, some depicting the open fields where many battles were fought and some capturing the stark and lonely aftermath of the conflict. Given his obsession with Dutch themes, one heavily illustrated event may have had special resonance for him. In late 1864 and early 1865, Union forces (including the 116th and 119th New York regiments) dug a canal that cut off a loop in the James River, Virginia. Allowing Union vessels to skirt the Confederate batteries stationed on the loop, the canal was known (after the narrow point of land separating the river from itself) as "Dutch Gap," and its treeless banks bore a distinct resemblance to the denuded hills in *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage Up the Hudson*. (Figure 15 shows a Confederate battery, on the loop of river, shelling Union ships and canal workers at Dutch Gap, the shoreline of which is visible as the line of hills on the horizon.) In Quidor's painting, Stuyvesant's vessel passes through a narrow defile—much narrower than the actual width of the river at Bear Mountain—while facing attack from the promontory. Many Dutch Gap images appeared in *Harper's* and *Leslie's* between November 1864 and 1865, showing the high bare hills surrounding the pass. At the risk of being too fanciful, we might speculate that Quidor saw an opportunity to paint his own "Dutch Gap"—Stuyvesant and his crew sailing, under distant attack, through the treeless pass—in the episode from Irving's *History*.

A year after Appomattox, when Quidor painted *Peter Stuyvesant's Voyage Up the Hudson*, numerous histories of the Civil War were already available—and most, as Anthony W. Lee notes, included images derived from photographs and sketches.[30] Art historians estimate that the Civil War generated as many as 6,000 images, making it an unprecedentedly optical conflict that saturated mid nineteenth-century visual culture. In this environment, I have argued, Quidor did not abandon his customary focus on Irving or on the Hudson River region. But he did transform his style—one is tempted to say that the monochromatic, amber-shellacked paintings are enshrouded by the fog of war—and he traced the course of the conflict through his series of pictures set on the Hudson estuary and the river. In transposing geographies and re-scaling the interest of his apparently regional pictures after Irving, Quidor anticipated what Alexander Gardner also established as the *raison d'être* of his famous *Photographic Sketch Book of the War* (1866). Echoing the title of Irving's *Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* (1819), Gardner's collection of 100 Civil War photographs shared with its namesake what literary historian Elizabeth Young describes as an investment in episodic, incomplete glimpses: Like Irving's wandering narrator Geoffrey Crayon, Gardner presents himself as an itinerant forced to quickly make pictures of the ruined and obscure places he passed through while following the Union army from battle to battle.[31] But what links Gardner's project with Quidor's—both derived from Irving's—is the way in which

30 Anthony W. Lee, "The Image of War," in Anthony W. Lee and Elizabeth Young, *On Alexander Gardner's* Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 18.
31 Elizabeth Young, "Verbal Battlefields," in Lee and Young, 59-60.

regional history quickly telescopes into a visualization of a national geography. Here is how Gardner frames the project on the title page:

> As mementoes of the fearful struggle through which the country has just passed, it is confidently hoped that the following pages will possess an enduring interest. Localities that would scarcely have been known, and probably never remembered, save in their immediate vicinity, have become celebrated, and will ever be held as sacred as memorable fields, where thousands of brave men yielded up their lives a willing sacrifice for the cause they had espoused.[32]

Quidor is nowhere near so nostalgic as Gardner. But both artists, in the 1860s, depict how the war rapidly reoriented local scenery—the features of the "immediate vicinity," whether a field in Antietam or the tidal currents off Jersey City or Anthony's Nose—to the movements of troops and the effects of war, on those troops, across the disunited states.

In this, Gardner and Quidor, invoking Irving, also reverse one of the major tendencies of his fiction. Irving's stories tend to reassert the power of the local over the displacements wrought by the wider world. Rip Van Winkle falls asleep in the American colonies and wakes up in the American republic, but even that momentous transformation ultimately makes no difference in his daily life; he continues to while away time at the tavern, rehashing familiar legends with his companions. The residents of Sleepy Hollow confront the arrival of the greedy Yankee Ichabod Crane in their rural retreat, but the legend of the horseman conveniently serves as a means to scare him away, and the phlegmatic byway on the Hudson returns to the way that it was. New Amsterdam, in *History of New-York*, falls to the British in 1664 and slides into the local obscurity, isolated from the mainstream of United State history, which Irving loved to chronicle. By introducing readers to forgotten places and out-of-the-way communities, of course, Irving might be said to monumentalize and publicize them even as his narratives seek to protect or to sentimentalize their obscurity. But Gardner and Quidor do not have that protective impulse. Inviting viewers to look at local sites as prints of widely shared experiences, their images capture how the Civil War, tearing across the physical landscape of the south and west and rending the emotional landscape of the north, obliterated the fantastical isolation and pleasurable remoteness of the regional byways—many of them in the Hudson River valley—in which Irving preferred to delight and wander.

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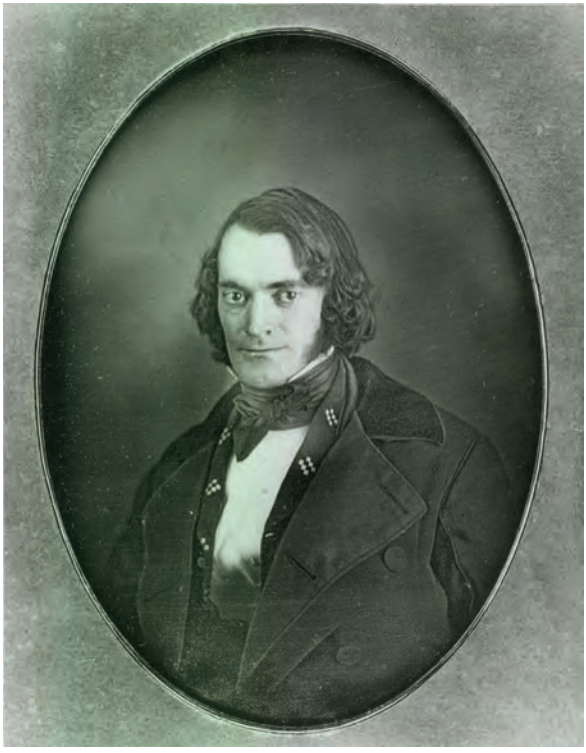
32 Alexander Gardner, *Photographic Sketch Book of the War* (Washington: Philp and Solomons, 1866), n.p.

The following articles were originally delivered as papers at The Worlds of Andrew Jackson Downing *symposium hosted by The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College, October 25, 2015. Each has been revised for publication.*

Downing and American Culture

Aaron Sachs



Andrew Jackson Downing, daguerreotype. Image courtesy of David Schuyler

David Reynolds began his recent book on antebellum America with the assertion that "the years from 1815 through 1848 were arguably the richest in American life, if we view the whole picture of society, politics, and culture." In other words, the era that produced Andrew Jackson Downing was incredibly generative—but also incredibly complex. It's impossible to characterize this time period in any satisfying way. Should

we focus on the Market Revolution, as Charles Sellers proposed back in 1994? Well, Daniel Walker Howe, in his magisterial work of 2007, *What Hath God Wrought*, urged us not to. Should we refer to it as the Age of Jackson? Was it an era of reform? And if so, what exactly do we mean by reform? Was this period marked most significantly by the United States' transition from a republic to a democracy, as Sean Wilentz has argued? Or by the nation's transition to an ethos of Manifest Destiny? What do we make of the massive shifts toward urbanization and industrialization, or the revolutions in communications and transportation signaled by the telegraph and canals and railroads, or the explosion of print culture?[1]

My own preference is for an emphasis on cultural ambivalence. This clearly was a time of massive transformation, of intense modernization. As Lewis Perry has noted in his book *Boats against the Current*, "those who are arguing for the beginnings of modernity in the late nineteenth century could with profit push further back in time."[2] But in this type of period, when change seems so decisive, scholars often seem to assume that the whole society simply went along for the ride. Perry's title hints that this wasn't the case in antebellum America, and I agree with him that those who endorsed or even lobbied for major transformations were often tormented by mixed feelings, by a strong sense of loss and risk. What if we are disconnecting ourselves too completely from the past? What if we are moving too quickly? But, then, we also have to ask what lies behind those kinds of questions. Were the questioners merely articulating a kind of conservatism? Merely trying to retain control over the best parts of the society they grew up with?

Perhaps Carol Sheriff put it best in the subtitle of her excellent study of the Erie Canal: Antebellum Americans were keenly aware of "the paradox of progress." There was an embrace of a kind of expansive, can-do "go-aheadism" in this era, but within the category of "Progress" there were many alternative pathways, and no alternative pleased everyone. As towns spread out across upstate New York while the Erie Canal was being built, people expressed the feeling that their culture was becoming more impersonal, diffuse, alienating, isolating; at the same time, some people now felt more connected across both space and time, finding it in some cases easier to go back and visit places they had left, seemingly permanently, years before. There were reformers on the Whig side and reformers on the Democratic side; there were reformers within the community of business leaders and reformers within the new class of wage workers; and there were utopian reformers who wanted to opt out of the market altogether. To some, the fluidity of selfhood in this period meant equal opportunities for everyone, or at least everyone who was white and male; to others, the fluidity of selfhood meant

1 See David S. Reynolds, *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson* (New York: Harper, 2008), quotation on p. 1; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1991); Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 2007); and Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: Norton, 2005).

2 Lewis Perry, *Boats against the Current: American Culture between Revolution and Modernity, 1820-1860* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993).

Asher B. Durand, *Progress (The Advance of Civilization)*, 1853, oil on canvas, 48 x 71 15/16 inches, unlocated

the rise of the confidence man. A good way to start an argument in the 1830s or '40s in the United States would be to ask a group of people to define "improvement."[3]

Nevertheless, I think much scholarship of this time period still skews toward a kind of cultural cohesion. Consider the famous Hudson River School painting whose title is *Progress*, by Asher Durand, completed in 1853, the year after Downing's death. (The painting's subtitle is "The Advance of Civilization.") The current consensus among historians and art historians makes this a very easy picture to read; take the analysis of Angela Miller in her canonical book *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representations and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875*: "No painting better exemplifies the narrativity, confidently nationalistic message, and proprietary gaze that characterized the national style…. *Progress* telescoped the discrete stages of America's movement from wilderness to civilization in one image." You have all the sequential phases of the transportation revolution here, all the classic so-called internal improvements, from roads to canals to steamboats to a railroad that crosses an aqueduct, all validated and glorified by the bright shining light at the center of the image, which seems to beckon the entire country toward an even more glorious future, acceptable to both Whigs and Democrats, indeed to most white folks. There are Indians here, but they are clearly being left behind, in the darker part of the painting. Is it any surprise that Durand painted this picture under the sponsorship of Charles Gould, an executive with the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad?[4]

3 See Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), and also note Louis P. Masur, *1831: Year of Eclipse* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), and Anne Norton, *Alternative Americas: A Reading of Antebellum Political Culture* (Chicago: U. Chicago Press, 1986).

4 Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1993), p. 154.

Once I started looking at these kinds of images a bit more closely, though, I began to feel that this scholarly consensus, this agreed-upon interpretive framework, might be even more limiting than most unchallenged consensuses. What if we were looking for the wrong things? Maybe it would make sense to read a picture like Durand's not teleologically from left to right but more holistically, not as motion from darkness to light but rather as a balancing of shadows and brightness, not as a clear-cut endorsement of anything but rather as a hybrid landscape rich with uncertainty and ambivalence? Perhaps there's good formal evidence to see it as more of a question rather than a perfectly confident assertion, not "Progress: The Advance of Civilization!" but "Progress? The Advance of Civilization?"

I think it's worth noticing that we are clearly looking eastward toward the sunrise. We, the spectators, are given the perspective of the Indians and the wilderness; we're on the frontier, the borderland, looking back toward civilization. We're in a liminal space, and that's always a bit unsettling. And though the title suggests that civilization is advancing toward us, there doesn't seem to be any guarantee that it will take any particular form, or even that it will arrive. Who can read the future? Perhaps the development that Durand wishes to see is a development that preserves border spaces, that leaves room for Indians, that is still surrounded by dark forests.

Thomas Cole, *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm – The Oxbow*. 1836. oil on canvas, 51 ½ x 76 inches. Gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, 1908 (08.228). Image copyright ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

Additionally, the curve of the river looks a lot like a question mark, and it was a clear echo of the curving river in a famous work by Durand's friend, Thomas Cole, recognized as the foremost painter of the Hudson River School: *The Oxbow*, of 1836, which is perhaps even more obviously uncertain and ambivalent.

In Cole's painting, we have a forested mountain in the background with the Hebrew name "Noah" carved into its flank, as if by loggers or farmers—clearly the suggestion is of a punishing flood. The right side of the canvas shows a pastoral paradise of well-watered fields dotted with trees and bathed in sun, while the left side captures a dark storm over a tangled wilderness of rocky pinelands, with a couple of leaning, blasted trees and stumps in the foreground and a tiny artist figure looking out from among the boulders in the middle distance. Apparently, the people of Massachusetts were carving out a viable civilization in the welcoming Connecticut River Valley, despite occasional tempests. But the picture also suggests that the wild and the calm are never in perfect balance: the river is threatening to overflow its banks, and no one knows what the next storm might bring, especially since a deforested landscape is much more prone to flooding.

In other words, I think both of these paintings speak directly to the tensions of development: they engage with all the complexities of our relationship to nature. This is not simply scenery, to gaze at; this is a poignant acknowledgment that in order to live we must constantly use up the resources we depend on, an acknowledgment that every step toward a seemingly more settled existence also undermines the stability of our habitat and removes people from old and often beloved patterns of relating to the environment.

These paintings, in short, provide a useful context in which to understand what I see as *Downing's* ambivalence.

Of course, Downing hasn't always been portrayed in particularly complex or ambivalent terms. He has been blamed, for instance, for driving middle-class American families into the private sphere of the suburbs, where, within a few years, they supposedly cared only for their lawns and their level of consumption.[5] According to some of his critics, Downing aligned himself with "the most paternalistic and narrowly didactic dimensions to nineteenth-century social reform," imagining the landscapes and houses he designed as contributing to a "forcible education of the masses," who were too often drunk, and too often Irish, and, in any case, needed to be disciplined and refined. He upheld capitalistic acquisitiveness and property ownership and "evoked a sense of mastery over the environment"; and, ultimately, he thought of horticulture and landscape architecture as most suitably and effectively pursued by retiring gentlemen in the privacy

5 See, for instance Elizabeth Kolbert, "Turf War: Americans Can't Live without Their Lawns—But How Long Can They Live with Them?" *New Yorker* 84 (July 21, 2008), pp. 82-6, and Virginia Scott Jenkins, *The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), pp. 23-7.

of their homes.[6] One can certainly find isolated passages in Downing's writings to support these portrayals of his career, and, yes, the antebellum period did see the rise of a particular kind of reactionary suburbanism. But, especially when you factor in Downing's environmental commitments, I think it makes much more sense to see him as a kind of balancer, urging Americans to cultivate a mode of life in conversation with "the rich and varied charms" of nature, with "the groves and gardens, which… creep beyond the nominal boundaries of the estate, and re-appear in the pot of flowers in the window, or the luxuriant, blossoming vines which clamber over the porch of the humblest cottage by the wayside."[7]

Alexander Wadsworth, *Plan of Mount Auburn*, 1831. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery Historical Collections, Cambridge and Watertown, MA

In a climate of intense speculation, with private land becoming the defining American commodity, Downing saw an engagement with nature as a defining *public* act, since nature put each individual human being in touch with a vast world characterized by interdependence. His own epicurean delight in horticulture was partially a means of encouraging both an ethic of care and a constant sense of gratitude.

Certainly, Downing's insistence on settling down—through his horticultural handbooks, his collections of designs and patterns for cottages and farms and gardens, his advice columns on aesthetics—could seem moralistic, conservative, and exclusive, but it took its deepest meaning from the context of land rushes and what he called the general

6 Quotations: Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 82-3 and 91, and Adam Sweeting, *Reading Houses and Building Books: Andrew Jackson Downing and the Architecture of Popular Antebellum Literature, 1835-1855* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996), pp. 75-6; also see Philip J. Pauly, *Fruits and Plains: The Horticultural Transformation of America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Press, 2007), pp. 170-1; Therese O'Malley, "Introduction" to A.J. Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1991), pp. v-xii; John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1988), pp. 86-7; Tamara Plakins Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen: The Meaning of Country Life among the Boston Elite, 1785-1860* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1989), pp. 164-8; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1985), pp. 63-6 (Jackson calls Downing "a snob and an aloof aesthete," p. 64); and Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Vintage, 2004), pp. 26-35.

7 Downing, *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*, 6th ed. (New York: A.O. Moore, 1859), pp. vii and ix-x.

"SPIRIT OF UNREST," which, in the era of Manifest Destiny, Downing thought of as perhaps "the most striking of our national traits." The average American was taking independence too far, repeatedly pulling up stakes, allowing ambition and greed to make of him "a feverish being, in whose Tantalus' cup *repose* is the unattainable drop."[8] Of course, in the word "repose," I hear a reference to the rural cemetery movement, which Downing was involved with, since the new garden-style cemeteries were often referred to as "places of repose." These were meant to be public places where feverish Americans could pause and slow down and participate in a different kind of culture.[9]

Like Thoreau, and like the cemeterians, Downing preached civic engagement through "an honest resting on the earth":[10] it wasn't that you necessarily had to be rooted in one spot, but you did have to feel some sense of responsibility to the public sphere, to the human and natural community through which you wandered. He believed in "the joint culture of the earth and the heart," and he hoped that if this sort of ethos could spread, then maybe he would live to "see the great valleys of the West the garden of the world."[11]

Downing was quick to envision the possibilities inherent in a new kind of suburban life—but it had to be arranged according to the principles of landscape gardening instead of the principles of capitalism. Indeed, the earliest picturesque suburbs were explicitly modeled on the rural cemeteries.

Downing did not actually design any of these suburbs himself, but he laid down guidelines for them, in response to some troubling developments in his home territory. By the late 1840s, a number of speculators were seeking to capitalize on improved railroad and steamboat service in the Hudson River Valley: they bought up land, subdivided it into small lots according to a simple grid, and advertised their wares. In at least one documented case, as David Schuyler has shown, these entrepreneurs also attempted to capitalize on Downing's reputation by printing their ads with illustrations from one of his books—despite the fact that their "design" explicitly contradicted most elements of Downing's style and philosophy.[12] The development in question, located next to Tarrytown and eventually to be known as Irvington (not Irving Park, established a decade later), could easily have been adapted to the local picturesque topography, instead of offering, in Downing's words, "mere rows of houses upon streets crossing each other at right angles." But legal codes and precedents, ever since the Land Ordinance of 1785, had explicitly encouraged this kind of efficient, gridded "Progress," and though Downing insisted that "the plan and arrangement of new towns ought to be a matter

8 Downing, "Influence of Horticulture," in A.J. Downing, *Rural Essays,* (New York: Geo. A. Leavitt, 1869; orig. 1853), ed. George William Curtis, pp. 13-14.

9 See Aaron Sachs, *Arcadian America: The Death and Life of an Environmental Tradition* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 2013).

10 A.J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1968; orig. 1850), ed. George B. Tatum, p. 144.

11 Downing, "Influence of Horticulture," p. 16.

12 See David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. Press, 1996), pp. 204-8.

E. Baumann, *North Western Part of Llewellyn Park*, 1853, lithograph. Illustration from A. J. Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*, 8th ed. (New York: O. Judd, 1859), Figure 106, following page 570. Courtesy of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY

of national importance," it seemed to him that no one was paying attention except the capitalists.[13]

He articulated his own approach most cogently in an angry *Horticulturist* essay of June 1850. Called "Our Country Villages," it offered Americans "a neighborhood where, without losing society, they can see the horizon, breathe the fresh air, and walk upon elastic greensward." For Downing, the one "indispensable" feature of an ideal town would always be "a large open space, common, or park, situated in the middle of the village—not less than twenty acres; and better if fifty or more in extent…, held as joint property, and for the common use of the whole village." Clearly, the entire community would benefit, and Downing took pains to imagine "the social and common enjoyment" of "such public pleasure-grounds," which might ultimately be ornamented with arbors and bandstands, to facilitate the hosting of free open-air concerts in the summertime. It is true that Downing's perspective was not radically democratic, since he had a pretty specific idea about what constituted appropriate behavior for public spaces. But he did express a kind of egalitarianism in arguing for unrestricted access to environmental amenities and public culture: "Those who had neither the means, time, nor inclination, to devote to the culture of private pleasure-grounds, could thus enjoy those which belonged to all." Of course, Downing noted that he still believed

13 Downing, "Our Country Villages," in *Rural Essays*, pp. 240 and 239.

firmly "in the power and virtue of the *individual home*"; but for the United States to become truly "*republican*," its citizens would have to dwell, also, in "public parks, public gardens, public galleries, and tasteful villages."[14] Especially given the power of Downing's influence, it was not out of the question for American society to develop precisely along these lines—more slowly, with more restraint. Though urban planning did not become a widely established profession until half a century later, Downing had helped make landscape a crucial issue in American development by the 1840s. As David Schuyler has pointed out, "dozens, perhaps hundreds" of "planned communities" that were in line with Downing's vision sprouted up in the 1850s, "but outbreak of the Civil War retarded the realization of the suburban ideal."[15]

The question of Progress clearly dominated the cultural discourse of the antebellum period (along with questions of freedom and slavery, of course). But it was a complex, contradictory discourse, with many competing elements. Downing himself was both progressive and conservative, a liberal-minded man who believed there ought to be certain limits on liberty.

Ultimately, Downing accepted many modern trends but asked his fellow citizens to stay in touch with nature, to integrate the environment into modernity instead of shutting it out. His design ethic was based on a close "study of *nature*… in a state of free and graceful development" and then an effort "to work in her own spirit."[16] And though Downing's many books did in a sense package and commodify middle-class culture, they also grounded an often untethered society, offering a common commitment to the more thoughtful shaping of space, as well as a common language of landscape, which Americans embraced with the same enthusiasm they showed for the prints and lithographs that popularized the paintings of the Hudson River School. Those paintings show a nation grappling with the deep question of just how many environmental sacrifices were worth making in the name of progress: what was the cost of development—how many trees needed to be chopped, how many views spoiled?

So, for me, Downing, together with the Hudson River School painters, may be most significant in terms of his role in American environmental history. Just consider the way that landscape painting changed after the Civil War, when Cole and Durand were out of fashion, and all the acclaim went to Albert Bierstadt. Now we've entered what I think of as the true era of Manifest Destiny, when many more people seem to agree on what Progress ought to mean. Progress is rapid expansion and the conquest

14 Downing, "Our Country Villages," pp. 236-43. Also note that Susan Fenimore Cooper, clearly influenced by Downing, made many of the same points some years later in her essay, "Village Improvement Societies" (1869); see Rochelle Johnson and Daniel Patterson, eds., *Susan Fenimore Cooper: Essays on Nature and Landscape* (Athens, Geo.: U. Georgia Press, 2002), pp. 64-77.

15 David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. Press, 1986), p. 160.

16 Downing, "A Few Hints on Landscape Gardening," in *Rural Essays*, p. 121.

Albert Bierstadt, American (born in Germany), 1830-1902, *Valley of the Yosemite*, 1864, oil on paperboard, 30.16 x 48.89 cm (11 7/8 x 19 ¼ in.), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Martha C. Karolik for the M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865, 47.1236 Photograph ©2017 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

of the Indians and the conquest of the land—all the land except for those wilderness gems that merit preservation in the name of American honor and grandeur. You don't see the nitty-gritty questioning of how exactly American civilization ought to develop; you don't see paintings explicitly asking what the American relationship to the environment ought to be. You just see the glorious western mountains and welcoming meadows, a visual hallelujah chorus, the sunshine of affirmation. It's landscape as backdrop, as timeless scenery, outside of history. It's landscape drained of ambivalence.

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The Architecture of Downing's Newburgh

William E. Krattinger

View of Newburgh, N.Y., c.1852, the Dutch Reformed Church, without cupola, is visible on the right side just below the horizon and above the paddlewheel of *The Newburgh*, Library of Congress

In this 1842 engraving, the white walls of the Dutch Reformed Church rise up among the red brick buildings around and below it. (Courtesy J. Hoekema)

Profound changes attended American architecture in the period corresponding with the life of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852). During Downing's lifetime, regional building traditions, including those of his native Hudson Valley, were reshaped by new national trends inspired by an increasingly self-aware American cultural consciousness. Downing's life coincided with the culmination of the first phase of American neoclassicism, the Greek Revival, a pervasive idiom ultimately succeeded by the architecture of the Picturesque. While Downing was for a time a spectator in the shifting architectural tastes of the period, by the time of his death the new concepts he had championed as a proselytizer of the Picturesque were central to the changes that had occurred nationally. During the mid-1830s the seeds of architectural change were sown in Downing's Newburgh, New York, a place central to his own experience and evolving views on architecture and domestic culture.

Among those who figured prominently in this era, aptly coined Newburgh's "Age of Architecture" by Arthur Channing Downs,[1] was Downing's future collaborator, architect Alexander Jackson Davis. The construction of the Dutch Reformed Church (1835-7) on Grand Street, designed by Davis and built in association with Russell Warren, introduced the sophistication and scale of the New York City Greek Revival to Newburgh and was celebrated as compelling evidence of cultural progress there. It is generally acknowledged as the first Newburgh edifice comprehensively designed and built under the auspices of a professional architect; as such, the church offered a distinctive break from localized building traditions that had dictated the complexion of the built environment to that time. The church would soon be followed by work representative of the percolating concepts of the Picturesque, namely the Gothic Revival and Tuscan-Italianate styles, which came to dominate the architectural landscape of mid-nineteenth century America. This was an exciting time in Newburgh, characterized by relative prosperity and the introduction of new architectural fashions and buildings of increased distinction. The young Downing was well attuned to the changes occurring around him, his interests stimulated by the activity in which he would eventually participate.

As noted by scholars such as David Schuyler, Downing's life was predominately set against the backdrop of Newburgh and the mid-Hudson Valley. Save for occasional periods of absence, the events of his life were largely staged there.[2] At the time of his birth and through his adolescence, the built environment of Newburgh remained one largely cast in provincial terms. While situated within the heavily Dutch and German settled Hudson Valley, Orange County was nevertheless populated at an early date by considerable numbers of people of English and Scotch-Irish extraction. First settled by Palatine Germans around 1714, by the mid-eighteenth century Newburgh was home to a mixed ethnic population, and its early architecture was thus molded by multi-

1 Arthur Channing Downs, *The Architecture and Life of the Hon. Thornton MacNess Niven (1806-1895)*, (Goshen, NY: Orange County Community of Museums & Galleries, 1972), 19. Downs' research was the first to extensively recount this era of Newburgh's cultural and architectural history, which he used as a framework to view Niven's contributions. All subsequent historians of this period are indebted to his groundbreaking efforts.

2 David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1996), 9-10.

ple cultural points of view. Stylistically, the Roman-inspired Federal style remained predominant from Downing's birth until the construction of the Dutch Reformed Church—begun when Downing was twenty— at which time the newer "Grecian style" (of which he proved a vocal critic) fully blossomed. Precious little of Newburgh's earliest architecture remains, most having been swept away by the relentless tides of progress and the destruction wrought by urban renewal. The gambrel-roofed Reeve house on Montgomery Street and the Hasbrouck house (Washington's headquarters) are two of the earliest extant dwellings.[3] The former embodies customary English spatial and design features, while the latter speaks to the stone masonry tradition fostered by the Dutch and other northern European groups; both are important survivors that portray the complexity of the early built environment. Asher Durand's 1843 painting *Farmyard on the Hudson*, a view of the river near Newburgh, speaks subtly to this condition in its depiction of a working farm where a traditional English threshing barn and Dutch hay barrack exist comfortably side by side. Sadly, most all of Newburgh's historic waterfront, the terminus of the Cochecton Turnpike and an important steamboat landing, is but a thing of memory.

The Highlands from Newburgh. The house on the right is the Reeve House.
The history and topography of the United States of America,
by Hinton, John Howard, published 1850

The importance of Newburgh's early architecture on Downing's developing critical and creative faculties cannot be understated, as it was there and in adjacent parts of Orange County that his first mental images of a collective American architecture were formed. Newburgh's physical environment witnessed considerable change during his life

3 Both buildings were documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The Reeve house was likely erected ca. 1800; the first portion of the Hasbrouck house was built ca. 1750.

and in that period shed its provincial character. Much of the Newburgh that Downing saw through his own eyes, including his house and estate, has been lost to us, leaving early illustrations and documentary accounts to suffice for purposes of analysis. Horatio Spafford, in his 1824 gazetteer, described the Newburgh of Downing's youth as having "about 500 houses, 4 churches, an academy, a bank, and 100 stores and shops." It further indicated the village was "handsomely laid out in streets and squares."[4]

Hasbrouck House, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress

Given that domestic architecture was central to Downing's work, Newburgh's houses must have been a source of particular interest to him. Both the Hasbrouck and Reeve houses were prominent among the village's dwellings, in part on account of their respective locations; the latter appears in a ca. 1845 view of Newburgh based on an earlier work by W.G. Wall. Other early houses, as recounted by historian Samuel Eager in the 1840s, included a frame house on Water Street—"the top or upper story of the old George Gardner stone house… taken off after the [Revolutionary] war, and drawn up the hill by oxen to its present site"; the Gardner stone house (from which the former was removed); the Isaac Belknap house on Water Street; an old house on Montgomery Street near William Roe's house; "the old Thomas Gardner house" on Colden Street; and Eli Hasbrouck's house on Liberty Street. Of these dwellings, all claimed by Eager to be of pre-Revolutionary origin, nothing further is known.[5] An 1803 advertisement noted the availability of a recently completed Water Street house, "two stories high, three rooms on a floor"—a common type that appears in the earliest views.[6]

By the time of Downing's birth, Newburgh's housing stock was composed of older frame and stone dwellings such as those described by Eager alongside newer houses

4 Horatio Gates Spafford, *A Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Albany: B.D. Packard, 1824), 339.
5 Samuel Eager, *An Outline History of Orange County* (Newburgh: S.T. Callahan, 1846-47), 223.
6 "For Sale," *Rights of Man* [Newburgh], Sept. 12, 1803. More specifically, this house type would be characterized by a three-bay façade with side entrance plan and end gables; period real estate advertisements, such as those in *Rights of Man* and the *Orange County Patriot*, sometimes included woodcuts of this type.

that were rapidly filling out vacant lots as the population expanded. They likely would have all qualified as "meagre and comfortless in their exteriors" (to borrow Downing's words), the vestiges of an uninformed era of design.[7] Of the beauty of its domestic architecture around 1830 it was observed that Newburgh "had not a high reputation." However, a half-century later "charming cottages and sumptuous villas are to be seen in every direction, and year by year the hills and plateaus in the city and vicinity are more and more crowded with the abodes of wealth…"[8] By the time of Downing's death, Gothic Revival and Tuscan-inspired villas and tree-lined thoroughfares marked the village's upper streets as a premier residential quarter, his own Highland Garden prominent among these.

***View of the Hudson River near Newburg* [sic]. Meyer, Hermann Julius, 1826-1909, publisher; Marian S. Carson Collection, Library of Congress**

As a civic-minded individual genuinely concerned with Newburgh's cultural identity and intellectual and social institutions, Downing also was deeply concerned with the state of public architecture. In his youth, the most ambitious works of architecture were Newburgh's four churches and the Newburgh Academy—all of which conformed architecturally to long-established traditions— in addition to the Newburgh Bank. In 1822 the Associate Reformed Church completed its present Grand Street edifice, a frame building of conventional Wren-Gibbs meetinghouse lines whose tall steeple figured prominently in the early skyline. The academy was a two-story frame building constructed in the 1790s;[9] it, too, followed accepted educational models. Begun in 1811, the Newburgh Bank was a three-story masonry building that presumably also

7 A.J. Downing, *Cottage Residences* (New York: Wiley & Halsted, 1856 ed.), 11.
8 Edward Manning Ruttenber, *History of the County of Orange: With a History of the Town and City of Newburgh* (Newburgh: E.M. Ruttenber & Son, 1875), 203.
9 Eager, *Orange County*, 222.

followed conventional models, though distinguished by the use of brick.[10] Among the best expressions of Newburgh's architecture when they were built, all would soon appear hopelessly out of date as buildings of greater sophistication—among them the Dutch Reformed Church, the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Synod, and the Orange County Courthouse—began to populate the landscape.

Newburgh's architecture emerged from its provincial origins in the 1830s, corresponding locally with a period of cultural enlightenment and increasing civic introspection. The first impetus toward change, although provincial in scope, nevertheless came from within the community. In the mid-1830s two affluent Newburgh merchants, William Roe and David Crawford, commissioned houses that bespoke their elevated social and economic position in the community.[11] These might be termed the houses of Newburgh's "River Gods," a phrase used by J. Ritchie Garrison to describe the upper-echelon merchants who at one time dominated the culture of the Connecticut River Valley.[12] Impressively scaled, both houses reflected late Federal-style trends and were in that way chasing after a waning fashion, as by this time the Greek Revival was finding expression in larger urban centers. Although Crawford's house boasted a monumental Ionic portico commanding a broad river vista, in detail it was still largely representative of the earlier Roman taste and therefore formed an episode of lingering architectural provincialism. The Tuscan portico of the Roe house was, like Crawford's, oriented toward the Hudson River, and this elevation, opposite Grand Street, served as the principal one. Both houses were conceived to capture the attention of river traffic and figure prominently in views of Newburgh, such as that published in 1845 by E. Whitefield. In its attenuated Roman proportions and detail, Roe's house shares more in spirit with the Adam-inspired lines of Boscobel than the new, bolder forms of the Greek Revival soon articulated in the Dutch Reformed Church. Though provincial in outlook, these were foremost among Newburgh's houses of the time; in size and architectural pretension they were well differentiated from the dwellings of the community's more middling residents. Neither their attenuated detail nor lofty porticoes would have held much appeal to Downing and his increasing identification with the theories of the Picturesque.

Roughly contemporary with the construction of the Roe and Crawford houses was the decision of the newly organized Dutch Reformed Church to engage Alexander Jackson Davis and partner Russell Warren to design a new edifice, dedicated in 1837. Davis visited Newburgh on many occasions and was well familiar with the region, given family connections in Orange County.[13] For the building, Davis provided a paraphrasing

10 "Banking House," *The Patriot* [Newburgh], 18 June 1811.

11 A construction date for the Roe house is not yet firmly established but might be clarified by an examination of the William Roe diaries maintained in the William Cornelius Hasbrouck Papers, Historic Huguenot Street, New Paltz. The Crawford house was completed in 1834. Both buildings were documented by HABS.

12 J. Ritchie Garrison, *Landscape and Material Life in Franklin County, Massachusetts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 155.

13 Jane B. Davies, "Alexander J. Davis, Creative American Architect," in *Alexander Jackson Davis, American Architect, 1803-1892* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 17.

The David Crawford House, c.1830, 189 Montgomery Street, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress

of the Church of the French Protestants in Manhattan (1831-34), a marble-walled building erected during his partnership with Ithiel Town.[14] While built in much simpler terms, the Newburgh church nevertheless offered something the Manhattan building could not, a commanding position overlooking a broad expanse of the Hudson River, framed by the rounded landmasses of the Highlands. The church provided a more forceful expression of classical ideals by eschewing conventional Wren-Gibbs models in favor of a design directly inspired by Greek sources. It was during this project that Davis first came in contact with Newburgh native Thornton M. Niven, who worked as a stonecutter on the project and later emerged as a capable architect. As a well-known and connected New York City architect, Davis's influence on local building tradesmen like Niven must have been considerable, providing them with a wider perspective on their chosen field of endeavor.[15]

Davis continued making trips to Newburgh following completion of the Dutch Reformed Church, including occasions when he visited Downing. Downing was surely familiar with the church, though whatever criticism he had of it specifically were by all indication left unexpressed. The two men were first introduced to each other by Robert Donaldson, a constant patron and champion of Davis, in the later 1830s.[16] In 1847-49, Davis developed plans for Newburgh resident Amos G. Hull, among them a gatehouse, a component of a larger scheme inclusive of a commodious stone villa that failed to materialize. For the gatehouse, Davis employed a Norman Romanesque idiom, a reference to the villa that was never constructed.[17] The gatehouse was erected but demolished in the 1960s, leaving only a portion of wall and watch turret extant. While not often associated with Romanesque architecture, the project portrays Davis's explorations of a wide range of historical precedents; Downing, with whom Davis was collaborating informally at the time, included designs for two Romanesque-inspired

14 The French Protestant Church, a lost landmark of the American Greek Revival, demonstrated Town & Davis's successful fusion of the Greek Ionic order with other influences. Although its portico was derived from the Temple on the Illisus at Athens, the building sat on a high podium—more characteristic of Roman temples—and featured a dome of seemingly Baroque precedent. The interior was by Davis's own account patterned to some extent after Sir Christopher Wren's St. Stephens, Walbrook.

15 Although Russell Warren assumed the duties of construction superintendent for the project—Eager noted him singularly as the building's architect—Davis visited the building site on multiple occasions and it is presumed the two men were familiar with one another.

16 Writing in 1863, Donaldson conveyed to Davis, "Downing stole your thunder for awhile - but I always, on suitable occasion, claimed for you the seminal ideas which have been so fruitful." Letter to Davis from Donaldson, 12 May 1863, Davis Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

17 See Jane B. Davies, "Works and Projects," 112.

Dutch Reformed Church, c.1835-37, 132 Grand Street, Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress

villas in his watershed 1850 work *The Architecture of Country Houses*. Davis also was tasked with remodeling Downing's Highland Garden following his friend's death. That work, perhaps undertaken with mixed emotions, was executed on behalf of Charles C. Alger, who had acquired the property.[18]

Evidence also suggests that Newburgh was looking to other New York City architects to design important new works in the 1830s, as was the case further up the Hudson River in Albany and Troy.[19] Downs, in his research on Niven, offered compelling evidence that Calvin Pollard, a New York City architect, designed the Greek Revival-style steeple that was added to St. George's Episcopal Church on Grand Street in the mid-1830s, likely in addition to other work.[20] There also are indications that Davis's sometime partner, James H. Dakin, a skilled architect whose circle included Minard Lafever, also fielded work in Newburgh.[21] Given that the decade corresponded with the first concerted efforts by American architects to define their professional status, it is not unusual that Davis, and perhaps Pollard and Dakin also, secured commissions in Newburgh. During the following decade, Downing would continue to advance the cause of the professional architect by touting the services of Davis and others in his published work, further cementing the legitimacy of their professional status.

The changes attending Newburgh's architecture were not entirely resultant from outside influences; they required willing patrons and, in one specific instance, the efforts

18 Ibid, 115.

19 A.J. Davis, Calvin Pollard, James Dakin and Minard Lafever were among those architects who competed for or otherwise secured commissions for projects in Albany and Troy in the 1830-35 period.

20 Downs, *Niven*, 23-28.

21 Surviving in Dakin's remaining papers are two ink and wash drawings for a project located in Newburgh, though it is not known whether these plans were realized. They are inventoried as drawings for an unidentified building for "T.M. Moore, Newburgh, N.Y." Items 341 and 342, Folder 7, James Harrison Dakin Collection, Louisiana Division, New Orleans Public Library.

The Thornton Niven House c.1839-41, known as the Anthony House when inventoried as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey, at 201 Montgomery Street. Library of Congress

of a native son. Thornton M. Niven, the stonecutter-turned-architect, was a central figure to the new spirit pervading Newburgh's architecture from the mid-1830s onward. One can only assume his interactions with Davis (and possibly Pollard and Dakin) had a profound effect on his career and stirred his interest in architectural design. Niven's design for the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Synod (1837-39), now subsumed as a wing within the St. Luke's Hospital Complex, offered Newburgh its first distinctive expression, albeit naïve, of the Gothic Revival. It was followed shortly thereafter by Downing's design for his own Highland Garden villa (1838-39). Features such as the seminary's cut brownstone label molds and unusual castellated end parapets were by all indications firsts in Newburgh architecture.[22] Samuel Eager, writing less than a decade after the seminary's completion, noted that its appearance was "grand and noble, standing as it does on so elevated a situation." He further indicated it was "neatly finished for a public building of the kind…"[23] Shortly thereafter, Niven designed a house for himself on Montgomery Street, an early and interesting expression of the Tuscan-Italianate mode completed ca. 1841. For the Orange County Courthouse, (1841-42) on Grand Street near Davis's Dutch Reformed Church, Niven turned comfortably to the Greek Revival mode and there employed a Doric order portico for the façade, thereby creating a sort of classical enclave. Downs was among those who suggested that the landscaping for Niven's courthouse may have been executed by the young Downing himself, who by that time had established his reputation with the publication of *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening.*[24] While he was highly critical of the widespread use of the Greek temple as a model for the nation's domestic architecture,

22 See Downs, *Niven*, 28-29.
23 Eager, *Orange County*, 219.
24 Downs, *Niven*, 40.

Downing was more sympathetic toward its use for civic architecture, where the portico could serve a practical and not symbolic purpose.

Given Niven's early work as a stonecutter and stone yard proprietor, one can only wonder whether it was he who provided the design for Henry "Bully" Robinson's tomb in Old Town Cemetery, an 1853 Egyptian Revival-style structure that has long defied attempts to ascribe it to a specific designer. While at times credited to Davis, that possibility seems unlikely given the extent to which Davis's Newburgh work is documented. Niven's potential involvement warrants further exploration. Also defying definitive attribution is the house built for William C. Hasbrouck on Montgomery Street (ca. 1838-39), a building of distinctive Italian-Tuscan lines that has at times been attributed to the

Henry "Bully" Robinson's tomb in Old Town Cemetery, c.1853. Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress

Philadelphia architect John Notman. If it was built in the late 1830s, as tradition maintains, it is of considerable importance in the early national development of Italianate domestic idioms, and likely the work of a professional architect—Notman or otherwise.

The construction of Downing's Highland Garden introduced the Gothic Revival villa to Newburgh, the first of many that would be built in the village and nearby Balmville in direct response to his influence. For it, Downing took as his model published English designs, notably those presented in works by John Claudius Loudon and Francis Goodwin.[25] It is this house that served as the outward expression of Downing's theories on domestic architecture, and there that his career unfolded, at times in association with Davis and later with his two English-born protégés, Calvert Vaux and Frederick

25 See Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste*, 22-23.

The William C. Hasbrouck House c.1838-39, 99 Montgomery Street. Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress

Clark Withers. As noted by David Schuyler, Newburgh citizens must have been taken aback by the architecture of Highland Garden, with its "aggressively Gothic" features, which stood in stark contrast to prevailing tastes.[26] Long since demolished, the house was to become the centerpiece of a large landscaped property rendered in Picturesque terms, thereby offering itself as a model for the vital interrelationship between house and location that was a prevailing tenet of Downing's philosophies. Downing's house formed the physical manifestation of the ideals he espoused—as a dwelling specifically designed by an individual to meet his own aesthetic and functional preferences, it might be viewed much in the way of Thomas Jefferson's highly personal Monticello.

Downing's untimely death came as the design principles he promoted were finding full national expression in both landscape design and architecture. Into the void left by his absence came his skilled partners, Vaux and Withers, who continued his legacy in Newburgh before relocating their practices to New York City. At the time of Downing's birth in 1815, Newburgh was a thriving seat of regional commerce whose architecture remained largely insulated from anything but localized and regional influences. By the time he was twenty, a dramatic transformation was underway, and by his death at age thirty-six wholesale changes had been wrought, in large measure under the sway of the nationally influential ideas he espoused.

William Krattinger, New York State Division for Historic Preservation, is a National Register of Historic Places program analyst. His familiarity with the architecture of Newburgh stems from his work there and the National Historic Landmark designation of A.J. Davis's Dutch Reformed Church.

26 Ibid, 23.

Andrew Jackson Downing: Promoter of the Urban Public Park

David Schuyler

Although Andrew Jackson Downing spent his entire life in the village of Newburgh, and addressed most of his advice on houses and landscapes to those people who lived in rural areas, his was a world that was rapidly transforming itself. The growth of cities, the beginnings of industrialization, and the tremendous mobility of the American people all challenged traditional ideas of social order, as did the emergence of political and social democracy. Downing decried the "spirit of unrest" he observed in too many of his countrymen. "Unable to take root anywhere," he wrote of the typical migrating American, "he leads, socially and physically, the uncertain life of a tree transplanted from place to place, and shifted to a different soil every season." Downing's first book, the *Treatise on Landscape Gardening*, promoted a conservative world view, an attachment to place at a time of tremendous social change. In subsequent books, Downing articulated the importance of well-designed houses as bastions of stability. The home was a "powerful means of civilization," he wrote in the preface to *Architecture of Country Houses*, a reflection of the nation's progress from barbarism to a more advanced state of social organization. Downing went so far as to attribute a "moral influence" to the home, a counterweight to the "feverish unrest" so characteristic of Americans. In promoting the reform of domestic architecture, Downing also defined the optimal location for the family home, a well-designed suburban community nestled amid the middle landscape, a symbolic space standing between the frantic pace, squalid conditions, and sordid temptations of the evil city, on one hand, and the barbarism of the frontier on the other. He also became the most articulate champion of creating public parks in cities to provide spacious recreational areas for people who did not live in the countryside or could not afford to escape to the suburbs. [1]

1 Andrew Jackson Downing, "The Influence of Horticulture," *Horticulturist*, 2 (July 1847): 9; Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York, 1850), xix.

During the two decades prior to the Civil War, the United States experienced the fastest rate of increase in the urban population in its history. The sheer speed and scale of this growth—the product both of immigration from abroad and the cityward migration of native-born residents seeking work in industrial and commercial centers—transformed metropolitan America. As his career unfolded, Downing witnessed firsthand the growth of cities. The tiny village of his youth had become home to 8,933 residents in 1840 and increased by 28 percent, to 11,415, over the next decade. Population growth was the result of prosperity brought about by industrialization. The largest factory, the Newburgh Steam Cotton Works, had been organized in 1845 by several of the city's wealthy merchants. The imposing new five-and-a-half-story cotton mill stood adjacent to the Hudson River, just three blocks from Downing's grounds. More than 300 people, principally unskilled women, worked in the mill, while a number of iron foundries and other works located nearby provided employment for men. [2]

Downing was deeply ambivalent about the emergence of industrialism in Newburgh. While he welcomed the prosperity the new factories brought to the community, and surely benefited from the opportunity to design houses and landscapes for clients who could afford his services, he worried that poorly-paid laborers were forced to live in densely-crowded neighborhoods, in modest brick and frame houses erected on lots too small for a garden. Downing also witnessed the results of urban growth and the increase in poverty and squalor on his frequent trips to New York City, Albany, and Boston. He feared that the growth of urban areas—in population, density and scale of buildings, and the sheer expanse of built space—portended the development of a rigidly stratified society he considered a threat to the nation's republican institutions. One tangible solution to the lack of open space in cities would be the development of urban parks. [3]

In October 1848, Downing published an editorial in his monthly journal, *The Horticulturist*, entitled "A Talk About Public Parks and Gardens." The text took the form of a dialogue between the editor and an American who had just returned from Europe. What most surprised the tourist were the opportunities for public recreation he encountered in Germany, which far surpassed anything then available in American cities. Parks on the continent promoted a "social freedom, and an easy and agreeable intercourse of all classes" that greatly impressed the American. In Munich's English Garden, kings and commoners alike enjoyed recreational facilities built and maintained at public expense. While in the parks, citizens gained "health, good spirits, social enjoyment, and a frank and cordial bearing towards their neighbors, that is totally unknown either in England or America." Downing found in the park a solution to the congestion of cities and the increasing stratification of American society—a republican institution that brought all classes of residents together to enjoy healthful recreation. [4]

2 Stuart Blumin, *The Urban Threshold: Growth and Change in a Nineteenth-Century Urban Community* (Chicago, 1976), 1; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population*, 1840, 1850; David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Baltimore, 1996), 218-19.

3 Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste*, 219.

4 Downing, "A Talk About Public Parks and Gardens," *Horticulturist* 3 (Oct. 1848): 157-58.

Two years later, Downing had the opportunity to visit England. As he toured city and countryside he was particularly enthusiastic about the parks of London. While the architecture of the West End resembled that of fashionable neighborhoods in other European capitals, what he found so distinctive was the vast amount of open space, a cityscape that seemed to be "holding the country in its lap." London's West End parks conveyed to visitors "a broad and noble feeling of natural beauty." The landscape of St. James Park, he wrote, "seems to you more like a glimpse into one of the loveliest pleasure-grounds of the Hudson, than the belongings of the great Metropolis." The sheer scale of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens left Downing in a state of "bewildered astonishment" as he marveled at the "wealth of a city which can afford such an illimitable space for the pleasure of air and exercise for its inhabitants." The West End of London demonstrated to Downing, as it had to other visitors, the need for public parks in American cities. [5]

Upon his return from England, Downing made the creation of urban parks a personal crusade. His efforts took two directions. First, he accepted a commission to design the public grounds in Washington, D. C. This was an L-shaped tract, extending from the Capitol west to the site of the Washington Monument and then north to the President's House. In the 1791 plan for the new capital, Pierre Charles L'Enfant had intended for this space to become a "grand avenue," the aesthetic centerpiece of the city, but in the first half of the nineteenth century the space was largely ignored. One journalist described the site of the public grounds as a "bleak, unhospitable common" traversed by muddy roads and devoid of trees "except one or two scraggy and dying sycamores." Downing welcomed the opportunity both to beautify the nation's capital and to create what he believed would be the first "*real* park in the United States." In his February 1851 report accompanying the plan for the public grounds, as well as in other writings, Downing expressed hope that when completed the public grounds would demonstrate to other cities the importance of open spaces within the urban environment. If his plan were adopted, Downing predicted that the public grounds would become a "Public School of Instruction in every thing that relates to the tasteful arrangement of parks and grounds." [6]

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5 Downing, "The New-York Park," *Horticulturist* 6 (Aug. 1851): 345-49; David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore, 1986), 63-66.

6 The journalist, Christian Hines, is quoted in John Clagett Proctor, "The Tragic Death of Andrew Jackson Downing and the Monument to His Memory," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 27 (1925): 249-50; Joseph Henry, "Locked Book" diary, Nov. 25, 1859, and Downing to Joseph Henry, June 14, 151, both in Joseph Henry Papers, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.; Downing, "Explanatory Notes to Accompany the Plan for Improving the Public Grounds at Washington," Records of the Commissioners of Public Buildings, Letters Received, Letter 3518 1/2, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. For discussions of Downing's plan for the public grounds in Washington see Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Vision of Life for the Mall," *AIA Journal* 47 (Mar. 1967): 52-59; John W. Reps, "Romantic Planning in a Baroque City: Downing and the Washington Mall," *Landscape,* 16 (spring 1967): 6-11; Therese O'Malley, "'A Public Museum of Trees: Mid-Nineteenth Century Plans for the Mall," in *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991*, ed. Richard Longstreth (Washington, D.C., 1991), 61-76, and David Schuyler, "The Washington Park and Downing's Legacy to Public Landscape Design," in *Prophet With Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852*, ed. George B. Tatum and Elisabeth Blair MacDougall (Washington, D.C., 1989), 291-311.

Plan for the Public Grounds in Washington, A. J. Downing. Courtesy of Geography and Maps Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Downing's design coincided with Congressional approval of a significant expansion of the Capitol, with its soaring new dome designed by Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter. It is tempting to think of the Capitol project and the hiring of Downing to design the public grounds as an attempt to fulfill the aspirations of L'Enfant's plan and end derisive remarks about Washington being a "city of magnificent intentions." In any case, Downing's plan provided grand ceremonial spaces and embellishments suitable for the national capital, such as a triumphal arch as the principal entrance to the grounds and a suspension bridge over the Tiber Canal. He proposed a dignified setting for the still-incomplete obelisk to George Washington, which he designated Monument Park, a greensward interspersed with American trees and gently curving walks. His plan also included more intimate spaces and quiet walks amid open lawn or stands of evergreen trees and shrubs, especially adjacent to the new Smithsonian Institution building; this was a concession that the capital was most crowded in winter and early spring months, when Congress was in session. A small lake, fountains, and five miles of carriage drives and pedestrian paths that led visitors through a handsome landscape were the hallmarks of the plan. When completed, Downing expected that the public grounds would provide an alternative to the "straight lines and broad Avenues of the Streets of Washington,"

President's Arch, Washington, D.C., February 1851. Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

"Washington, D.C., The Projected Improvements," Lithograph by B. F. Smith, Jr, 1852. Courtesy of Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

and make it possible for residents to enjoy "all pleasant and healthful intercourse with gardens and green fields." [7]

Downing's plan was adopted by the Regents of the Smithsonian, and President Millard Fillmore approved that part of the project west of Seventh Street in the spring of 1851. Shortly thereafter construction commenced on the initial stages of site clearing and preparation, which Downing described as the "roughest operations of ground labor." At first he spent only a week each month in the capital overseeing the preliminary work of grading and draining the ground. As a result, Downing was roundly criticized by William Easby, the recently appointed commissioner of Buildings and Grounds, for his absentee supervision. Members of Congress also balked at the cost of implementing Downing's plan, which he estimated would require an appropriation of $50,000 for work in 1852 alone. Downing sought the support of friends such as Joseph Henry, first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, promising that "if you gentlemen who have influence in Washington will stand by me I will make the capital 'blossom like a rose.' " Congress did indeed appropriate the necessary funds for construction and work continued. [8]

Downing's death in the fire that destroyed the Hudson River steamboat *Henry Clay* on July 28, 1852, ended the momentum behind the improvements to the public grounds. Indeed, the following month one Congressman testified that it had been "universally understood" that the project would not have been undertaken "if it had

7 Downing, Explanatory Notes; Downing, "The New-York Park," 346.

8 Downing to Joseph Henry, June 14, 1851, Feb. 23, 1852, Joseph Henry Papers, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.; Joseph Henry to W. W. Corcoran, June 11, 1851, Corcoran Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

not been known that Mr. Downing would be employed." Although President Fillmore authorized construction of the design for the area east of Seventh Street six months after Downing's death, the project would never be completed and would not, as he hoped, promote a taste for park-building in the nation's cities. [9]

While work on the public grounds was going forward, Downing adopted a second strategy for promoting public parks: He took up the pen and made *The Horticulturist* a powerful publicist for the cause, focusing national attention on the need for a large park in New York City. In May 1851 Mayor Ambrose C. Kingsland had proposed the establishment of a park at the Jones Wood, a 160-acre site overlooking the East River that extended from 64th to 75th streets. While Downing was pleased that New York was considering construction of a park, he had specific ideas about the qualities of landscape that would be necessary to relieve the tedium of a city he described as "this arid desert of business and dissipation." A park had to be more than city squares, which Downing characterized as children's playgrounds, and needed to embrace "broad reaches of park and pleasure-grounds, with a real feeling of the breadth and beauty of green fields, the perfume and freshness of nature." He then advocated the establishment of a park of at least 500 acres in the central area of Manhattan Island north of 39th Street. [10]

"The New-York Park," the essay Downing published in the August 1851 *Horticulturist*, outlined both a rationale for park development and a comprehensive reformist agenda he termed "popular refinement." During his visit to England he had praised the "elevating influences of a wide popular enjoyment of galleries of art, public libraries, parks and gardens, which have raised the people in social civilization and social culture to a far higher degree than we have yet attained in republican America." Downing conceded that the common school was merely a beginning, that in order to fulfill its republican destiny the United States needed to promote the kinds of institutions that would provide "the refining influence of intellectual and moral culture" and welcome all classes of residents. His prescription, breathtaking in scope, simultaneously condemned the limitations of a supposedly classless society and held out the possibility of a more enlightened future:

> Open wide, therefore, the doors of your libraries and picture galleries, all ye true republicans! Build halls where knowledge shall be freely diffused among men, and not shut up within the narrow walls of narrower institutions. Plant spacious parks in your cities, and unloose their gates as wide as the gates of morning to the whole people.

The comprehensive program of popular refinement Downing advocated included "common enjoyments for all classes, in the higher realms of art, letters, science, social recreations and enjoyments." If successfully implemented, he predicted, it would "banish the plague-spots of democracy" and raise the level of civilization in the United States. [11]

9 *Congressional Globe*, 32nd Congress, 2d session, Aug. 26, 1852, 2374-76.
10 Downing, "The New-York Park," 345-49.
11 Ibid.

Fredrika Bremer, the visiting Swedish writer, believed that in "The New-York Park" Downing had "declared from his sphere the mission of the New World." But because of his tragic death at age thirty-six, Downing would not be able to complete that mission. While he did not have the opportunity to translate his ideas into the design of a park for New York, his writings contributed significantly to the establishment of public parks there and in cities across the nation. In 1857, Downing's former partner, Calvert Vaux, persuaded the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park to reject a preliminary plan for development prepared by engineer Egbert L. Viele and hold a competition to determine the park's design. Together with Frederick Law Olmsted, Vaux entered a plan in the competition, "Greensward," which captured first premium. A Connecticut farmer who was a correspondent to Downing's *Horticulturist* and whose writings on parks Downing first published in his monthly, Olmsted found in Downing the example for his own career in refining and civilizing American society. After winning the competition for designs, Olmsted and Vaux were entrusted with the responsibility for developing Central Park, and based on that success Olmsted became the preeminent park builder and landscape architect of his generation. [12]

Olmsted and Vaux attributed much of their personal and professional success, as well as the popular embrace of public parks, to Downing's influence. In the spring of 1860, when construction had advanced to the point that the lower portion of Central Park was open to visitors, they attempted to place there "some appropriate acknowledgment of the public indebtedness to the labors of the late A. J. Downing, of which we feel the Park itself is one of the direct results." The printed circular accompanying their letters soliciting donations for the memorial included the passage from "The New-York Park" in which Downing outlined the social and cultural benefits of public parks. Although nothing came of this effort, in 1882 Olmsted again attempted to honor Downing's memory by urging "special and reverent attention" to the surviving parts of Downing's plan for the public grounds in Washington, D.C. This was "the last and only important public work of Downing," Olmsted wrote, "who was not only a master of the art, but distinctly a man of genius, of whom his country should always be proud." Once again, in 1887 Olmsted and Vaux paid homage to Downing when, at the urging of Downing's widow, Caroline Downing Monell, they offered to donate their professional services to Newburgh for the design of a public park "if the city should name the reservation 'Downing Park.' " The two men and their sons prepared a plan for the park in 1889, and Downing Vaux, the son Calvert Vaux had named after his former partner, superintended its construction. Appropriately, the highest points in

12 Fredrika Bremer, *The Homes of the New World: Impressions of America*, trans. Mary Howitt, 2 vols. (New York, 1854), 2: 628-31.

the park overlooked the community of Downing's birth and the scenery of the Hudson River Valley he cherished. [13]

Downing was rightly celebrated as the "Father of American Parks" in the inaugural issue of *Park International*, and this is a critically important part of his legacy. The scraggly, boggy, deforested landscape of the Central Park site before its transformation at the hands of Olmsted and Vaux is a reminder of what too few people recognize today—that the creation of public parks was a major financial and social investment by cities and required the transformation of the landscape in anticipation of urban growth. These parks are a powerful statement that a century and a half ago the physical health and psychological well-being of residents were legitimate concerns for the municipal corporation. The hundreds of urban parks and park systems created in the decades after Downing's death were a remarkable response to the modernization of America, and sprang from Downing's fertile ideas and the fertile soil of the Hudson River Valley. The parks movement he championed was a vast and remarkably successful campaign for humanizing the American landscape.[14]

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13 Olmsted and Vaux, "Circular Proposing the Erection in Central Park of a Monument to Andrew Jackson Downing," Apr. 5, 1860, in Charles E. Beveridge and David Schuyler, eds., *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, III: Creating Central Park, 1857-1861* (Baltimore, 1983), 251-52; Olmsted, Appendix to the *Annual Report of the Architect of the United States Capitol for the Year Ending June 30, 1882*, printed in House of Representatives, *Documentary History of the Construction and Development of the United States Capitol Building and Grounds* (Washington, D.C. 1902), 1187; David Schuyler, "Belated Honor to a Prophet: Newburgh's Downing Park," *Landscape* 31 (Spring 1991): 10-17.

14 "Andrew Jackson Downing, Father of American Parks," *Park International* 1 (July 1920): 42-48; on the transformation of Central Park see Beveridge and Schuyler, eds., *Creating Central Park, 1857-1861*, passim.

Downing and the American Home

Caren Yglesias

Andrew Jackson Downing house drawn by Frederick Clarke Withers, 1853

Andrew Jackson Downing began his professional career in the garden, and in the short time until his death at thirty-six, he had become the country's first landscape architect. Then and today, Downing is better known for his writings than for the projects he built, many of which were unfinished or no longer exist, and it is primarily his illustrated writings that influenced home builders in the mid-nineteenth century. Using his popularity as an authority on horticulture, Downing became an advocate for public institutions, including urban parks, and a general spokesperson for advancing civic taste in design. His career responded to the significant changes occurring in the United States at that time. America's population continued to increase following a steady trend that added one-third more people every decade. Immigrants entered the

Eastern Seaboard through the ports of New York City and Boston, and travelled west over land or north on the Hudson River to the recently completed Erie Canal and the country's interior. This put Downing's location in Newburgh at the center of this migration, where his Botanic Garden and Nurseries supplied the seeds, cuttings, and plants that future homesteaders required. Moreover, his influence extended beyond horticultural information. His numerous publications offered a critical guide that helped home builders lay out their productive and pleasure gardens, and design their rural residences. The American home was defined by Downing's work, and while no single built house can be recognized as his ideal, his strategy for making an American home still resonates with those sensitive to a house's capacity to be a place associated with family and home.

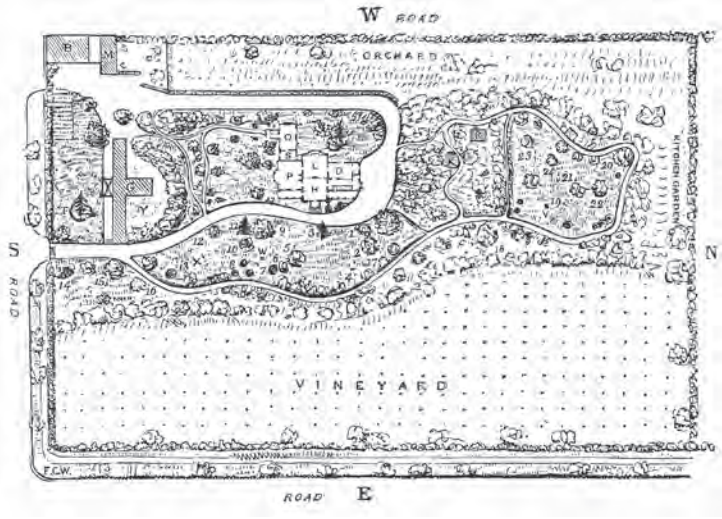
Downing's intent was to provide the guidance needed for domestic architecture to express associations he firmly believed would be a civilizing influence. To this end, he argued that a home could have moral significance to its inhabitants and correspondingly reflect their moral character. In his publications, Downing defined and described in detail how this could be achieved. After considering the "Useful," which included practical accommodations, Downing explained the "Beautiful" as either absolute or relative. Absolute beauty was achieved by applying the design principles of proportion, symmetry, variety, harmony, and unity. Relative beauty expressed "peculiar moral, social, or intellectual ideas."[1] The useful and the beautiful appealed to the mind and the senses, but required "Truth" if a home was to address and engage a larger social role in the community. For Downing, truth, of which there were three types, was important as an honest expression of domestic virtue. General truth was manifested by including elements that were specific to domestic buildings, such as verandahs, bay windows, and balconies. Local truth was expressed with houses that spread out in the country (unlike houses in the city that had to be built vertically). Specific truth required that small cottages, farmhouses, and large villas be made of materials whose attributes are appropriate to their scale and operations. Combined, the useful, the beautiful, and the truthful would result in homes of moral significance, and this, Downing argued, would cultivate and elevate the taste and moral society of Americans.

House Building in America

Until the end of the nineteenth century, America's architects were trained through lengthy apprenticeships or were educated in Europe, and they worked primarily in cities. However, eighty percent of all Americans lived in the country and had limited resources to direct their home-building efforts. Builder's guides and handbooks, such as the seven books written by Asher Benjamin between 1797 and 1843, were helpful because they illustrated the many ornamental elements that local or journeymen carpenters could make to give the house a single, consistent style. Doors and window trim,

1 A.J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York: D. Appleton & Co. and Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton, 1850; reprint with intro. by George B. Tatum, New York: Da Capo, 1968), 20.

wood paneling, stair parts, and mantelpieces would then have a unified appearance. Another architect, Minard Lafever, wrote five books between 1829 and 1856 that specifically popularized the Greek Revival and Gothic styles. Even more information was published by William Ranlett in 1848, but his two-volume set was expensive and offered no guidance on how a person might choose among possible architectural styles. As an alternative, Downing's publications supplied information and illustrations intended to help American home builders make decisions.



Andrew Jackson Downing gardens drawn by Frederick Clarke Withers, 1853

Downing's experience with house design began in 1838, at the age of twenty-three, when he designed and built his house on the family's nursery grounds.[2] The design was inspired by an Elizabethan-style house recently published in Francis Goodwin's *Rural Architecture* (1835). This was an example of Downing's method of working. Using the production of the English press, Downing adapted various styles in his own designs for the American audience. He interpreted the theory behind the design and altered its characteristics in ways that he thought better suited the American middle class, offering a range of building sizes and costs. He understood that not only was the climate in America different from England, but that there were many kinds of climates and landscapes in America, and that Americans themselves had many different characteristics and interests that would affect the homes they built.

Downing also benefitted from his lengthy professional association with Alexander Jackson Davis, who was trained as a lithographer and worked for Ithiel Town, a New

2 That year, Downing married Caroline DeWint, the eldest daughter of a local prominent businessman, and this house was their new home.

York City architect with the most extensive architectural library in America.[3] They were responsible for many state capitols and college buildings, usually designed in the Collegiate Gothic style. In 1837, Davis self-published his designs in the first of an intended six-part series of pattern books he called *Rural Residences*. The book failed to reach a broad audience because it was too expensive due to the hand-colored illustrations and its poor timing—publication of the first volume coincided with the Panic of 1837, a nationwide financial crisis and recession that lasted until the mid-1840s. Davis did not continue the series, although he built many projects that were included in publications by others.

For twelve years, Downing and Davis collaborated on house designs for Downing's publications and on built projects. An example of a built project was the improvements to the residence and garden designs for Robert Donaldson's Blithewood in Barrytown, New York.[4] For the house designs Downing published, his usual procedure was to sketch a floor plan and exterior view, sometimes adding details, and send it to Davis to prepare drawings suitable for white-line wood engravings by the notable American book illustrator Alexander Anderson, M.D.[5]

Even with this productive method, it is clear that Davis and Downing had different ideas about what Americans should build for their homes in the country. In Davis's *Rural Residences*, his first and simplest design is called "American Cottage." It is a rustic

American Cottage by Alexander Jackson Davis, 1837

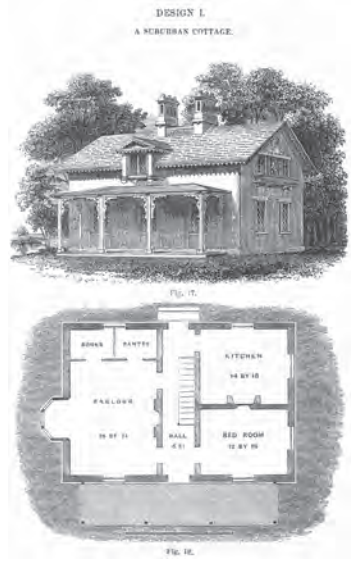
3 Roger H. Newton, *Town and Davis, Architects, Pioneers in American Revivalist Architecture, 1812-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 66-75. Their architecture partnership lasted from 1829 to 1835 and resumed from 1842 until Town's death in 1844.

4 Donaldson knew Davis from his work with Town at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

5 This method is undisputed because Davis had Downing's sketches bound in his copies of Downing's books, and these books are preserved in the Davis Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Relying on this evidence and the artists' initials that are visible on the finished drawings, it is certain that this team produced at least twenty of Downing's published designs, and there is no evidence to challenge that up to fourteen more of the thirty-nine total designs could have been produced in this manner.

Greek temple with bark-covered tree trunk columns that support a low-pitched roof and pediment. The chimney is barely visible. Downing strongly advised against this style because he thought it wholly inappropriate for American homes, noting that even ancient Greeks did not live in temple-like houses. The columned portico alluded to the temples of ancient Greece and Rome, which he wrote were perhaps appropriate for urban institutions associated with democratic ideals but were incapable of providing shade and a sense of welcome desired for a home.[6] The unusable attic was impractical and the visually-suppressed chimney did not emphasize the fireplace and hearth, which he considered essential to the expression of home and familial community.

In comparison, Downing's first design in his first book on rural domestic architecture, *Cottage Residences,* published five years later in 1842, is called "A Suburban Cottage for a Small Family."[7] This house also is made of wood, with vertical board-and-batten exterior siding. It has a large covered front porch. The more steeply-pitched roof has head room for second-floor bedrooms, and the deep overhangs protect the exterior walls and express a sense of shelter. Its chimneys are located prominently and have articulated bases and caps that help identify this building as a house and not some other type of structure, such as a barn. Downing found that the American audience was eager for his residential designs. His publications were reprinted numerous times and enjoyed a wide distribution during his lifetime and afterward.[8]



Suburban Cottage by Downing, *Cottage Residences,* 1842, Design I – View and Floor Plan

Downing's Reach

Of Downing's many publications on domestic architecture, *Cottage Residences* was most valuable because it includes site plans with the ten architectural designs that show the intended relationship between house and grounds.[9] Generously illustrated with

6 A.J. Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America* (New York and London: Wiley & Putnam, 1841; reprint of 4th edition of 1849, intro. by Therese O'Malley, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1991), 383.

7 This house design was built in 1844 for Dr. John Bartlett, 75 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut, and has been preserved.

8 See David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 72.

9 An expanded fourth edition was issued in 1852 with five more house designs, but it did not include site plans.

Cottage Villa, in the Bracketed Mode by Downing – *Cottage Residences*, 1842, Design V – View and Floor Plan

embedded drawings and made more economical due to advances in machine-sewn cloth binding,[10] this book systematically educated the reader about all matters of house design. For example, "A Cottage Villa in the Bracketed Mode" is shown made of fieldstone or wood, and includes many exterior elements that Downing thought likely to define the American style, such as a porch, a roof with deep overhangs supported by brackets, and fireplaces and chimneys located on interior walls (making them more efficient). Inside, the closet, pantry, and window seat (shown as *a*), and an indoor water closet in a back hall (*b*) are new and desirable elements. The site plan includes several landscape elements Downing recommended. A short drive (*l*) keeps the house close to the road, lowering construction and upkeep costs. An oval-shaped bed with three trees provides privacy between the house and road (*k*), and allows the house to be first seen more as a volume rather than as a two-dimensional façade. The strolling paths meander through existing forests and around planted flower beds (*j*); along an orchard (*f*) and kitchen garden (*e*), both shielded from view by verdant hedges; and extend up a hill (*a* and *b*) to a summer house (*c*) that overlooks the gardens.

Cottage Villa, in the Bracketed Mode by Downing – *Cottage Residences*, 1842, Design V – Grounds

Downing's architectural reputation expanded further when he wrote a thirty-three-page supplement for the American edition of George Wightwick's *Hints to Young Architects* (1847). Downing admired Wightwick's previous book, *The Palace of Architecture* (1840), where the topic of expressive built elements was associated with elevated human response. Downing's supplement covered three subjects: where to build, what to build, and how to build. Directions about where to build identify site locations for the buildings, gardens, and orchards, and also provide information about their relationships. Writing about

10 John E. Crowley, "The Invention of the Cottage as a Comfortable House: The Designs of Catherine Beecher and Andrew Jackson Downing" (unpublished mss, Delaware: Winterthur Museum and Gardens, 1996), 2.

what to build gave Downing an opportunity to discuss the principles of fitness and propriety, which helped home builders think about their habits of life and their homes' corresponding fabrication. Also discussed are building materials to match the scale and style of the house. That necessarily presented home builders with choices. As Downing wrote, "A country of the variety of climate and geographical breadth of ours, demands a like variety of style in its domestic architecture." [11] Finally, in the section on how to build, Downing advises hiring an architect, but he acknowledges that many home builders must act as their own "Clerk of the Works" and plan the building, supply materials, and supervise the labor.

Downing also edited the monthly journal *The Horticulturist* from its inception in July 1846 until his death in 1852, with his last editorial appearing that August.[12] Within the first year, this popular journal had subscribers in twenty-nine states and British provinces in Canada. The typical fifty pages included illustrated editorials, usually of a house designed by Downing, as well as articles and notices from the many horticultural societies emerging in America.

Downing continued his thinking in his second book about rural house design, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, published in 1850. This book included twelve cottages, seven farmhouses, and seven villas designed by Downing in thirteen styles. In addition, the book had eight designs by John Notman, a Philadelphia architect Downing admired, and Richard Upjohn and Alexander Davis, both architects in New York City.

Calvert Vaux, an English architect who became Downing's partner once his professional relationship with Davis ended in 1850, published the design of six constructed houses built in Newburgh, Washington, D.C., and Newport, Rhode Island, in *Villas & Cottages* in 1857. He attributed these designs as well as three unbuilt studies to "D. & V." In total, the information Downing presented in all his publications was his understanding of what a house should be for Americans. His interpretation was based on European theories on architecture that he used and refined for the situation of his audience.

The Origins of Dwelling

For Downing, the house was the fundamental building type, with attributes that came from the very origins of human dwelling. His interest in the origins of dwelling—the original meaning of shelter—followed architectural theory being published at that time. Downing knew the work of John Claudius Loudon, the foremost authority in England on horticulture and landscape design in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1837, Loudon published a review of the translation of Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy's *An Essay on the Nature, the End, and the Means of Imitation in the Fine Arts* (1823), and recommended the "*Essay on Imitation* to every architect who has any

11 George Wightwick, *Hints to Young Architects, Calculated to facilitate their practical operations, With additional notes and hints to persons about building in the country by A. J. Downing* (New York and London: Wiley & Putnam, 1847), xv.

12 Most editorials, but no illustrations, were published as a book entitled *Rural Essays* (New York: Putnam, 1853; reprint with intro. by George B. Tatum, New York: Da Capo, 1974).

pretensions to being a thinking man, and to every man of taste who has a library."[13] This book followed Sir John Soane's 1823 translation of Quatremère de Quincy's *De l'architecture Égyptienne*, in which he provided an account of the origins of dwelling that linked building type to occupation, style, and nationality. In this account, the cave was the habitat of the hunter and referred to the solid, massive, and dark architecture of the Egyptians; the tent was linked to the wandering shepherd and the lightness of Chinese architecture; and the hut was the farmer's home with the framed structure of classical Greek architecture.[14] Loudon published his version in *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* in 1833, and added the Gothic style as an imitation of a grove of trees.[15] Downing read American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson and may have known his account in the essay "Thoughts on Art," where he makes similar connections.[16] Downing published his interpretation in "The Real Meaning of Architecture," the opening chapter of *The Architecture of Country Houses*, where he wrote,

> What this habitation shall be, depends partly on the habits of the man, partly on the climate in which he lives. If he is a shepherd and leads a wandering life, he pitches a tent. If he is a hunter, he builds a rude hut of logs or skins. If he is a tiller of the soil, he constructs a dwelling of timber or stones, or lodges in the caverns of the rocky hill-sides.[17]

Downing is unique in that he linked eternal building types to human activities, climate, and landscape. Then, rather than proposing a hut-, tent-, or cavern-type "model house," as if that could satisfy a diverse population made up of many nationalities settling in a country with varied climates and landscapes, Downing offered designs that included some form of each dwelling type. In every design—proposed and built—elements of a cave-like, tent-like, and hut-like shelter may be found.

The cave-like forms include interior recesses, niches, and alcoves, as well as bay windows that extend to the floor and oriel windows that have seat-level interior sills. These are protected places to retire, to hide, and to see without being seen.

Downing is even more generous with tent-type elements in his house designs. These are the places that mediate between inside and outside. They include places specifically identified on his drawings as an arcade, balcony, entrance, gallery, loggia, pavilion, piazza, porch, stoop, terrace, umbrage, or verandah. Each element has a different degree of enclosure and hard or porous surface materials; some have roofs. Each element has a different connection to the primary structure. All are thin shelters that allow a person to be close to the landscape without feeling the full force of nature.

13 Review of *An Essay on the Nature, the End, and the Means of Imitation in the Fine Arts*, trans. from the French of M. Quatremère de Quincy by J.C. Kent (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., Cornhill) in *Architectural Magazine* 4, No. 35, edited by J.C. Loudon (January, 1837): 44.

14 Quatremère de Quincy, *De l'architecture Égyptienne, considérée Dans son origine, ses principes et son goût, et comparée sous les mêmes rapports à l'Architecture Grecque* (Paris: Chez Barrois l'aîné et Fils, 1803), 15, 16, 239.

15 John C. Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Longman, 1833), 5.

16 Ralph W. Emerson, "Thoughts on Art," *The Dial* 1 (January, 1841): 367-378.

17 Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 3.

The constructed hut was the house itself, with instruments and attributes included for comfort and convenience. Even the deep roof overhangs, which improve the structure's durability, are a formal attribute of the fabricated hut. Downing knew that besides offering information about architectural style, architects should incorporate recent technical devices in their designs. Domestic life was greatly improved with the inclusion of fireplace vents, dumbwaiters, roof ventilators, hot-air furnaces, and indoor plumbing. Many of these manufactured devices were recently available to order from American factories.

This author has argued that the inclusion of these eternal dwelling types as constructed elements in Downing's designs is the reason for their universal appeal.[18] Nevertheless, to understand the importance of Downing's impact on setting *expectations* for the American home, we turn to the information Downing provided that actually helped a home builder decide in which style to build.

Downing's Strategy

Downing directs his prospective home builders to begin with an examination. In the chapter, "What a Country House or Villa Should Be," he joins the character of the proprietor to the character of the land and to what should be built into a harmonious union.[19] He distinguishes among people with three different characters. The first is the man of common sense, who appreciates regularity, economy, and rational understanding. For this proprietor, Downing offers ten designs in the American Bracketed style, three in the Anglo-Italian or Tuscan style, and one in the Classical style. All homes were to be built on a gentle plain or fertile valley; his illustrations show relatively level land with the house sited in a forest clearing. Pleasure grounds would have smooth lawns, singly-planted stately trees, and flower beds cut into the turf and planted with single species.

The man of sentiment and feeling is a proprietor who values another kind of relationship between home and garden. This person appreciates the beauty of effect where a house has secluded and shadowy nooks in which to linger. The preferred landscape would be a vale or sylvan nook that is more varied than the landscape for the man of common sense. Downing offers eight designs in the Old English or Rural Gothic style, and one each in the Rustic Pointed, Italian, Elizabethan, and Romanesque styles. His illustrations and descriptions correspond to Edmund Burke's definition of the beautiful, with places of spatial intimacy and gradual variation.

The proprietor of the third character is the man of imagination. This proprietor wants a house with elements of originality, boldness, and variety. He (or she) should search for a building site under the brow of a steep mountain or with dramatic and diverse topography. Architectural styles of the Pointed or Tudor and Italianate,

18 For more on this, see Caren Yglesias, *The Complete House and Grounds: Learning from Andrew Jackson Downing's Domestic Architecture* (Chicago: Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2011).

19 Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 262-263.

of which Downing offers four each, or the Swiss, Norman, or Rhine styles would be favored. This combination corresponds to the picturesque best defined by Sir Uvedale Price as a buildable version of the sublime with high contrast and irregularity.

With these instructions, Downing recognized that a person's character tends to be primarily practical, emotional, or imaginative. While many people have some degree of all characteristics, certainly one is dominant, and a home built to correspond to the proprietor's individual nature will surely be a more satisfying dwelling.

Conclusion

Downing's writings influenced the design of the American home because they appeared when this country was experiencing great change and supplied an eager market. Increases in population and the expansion of opportunities to own land and build homes created a need for information to guide design decisions. Unlike others publishing at that time, Downing recognized the diversity of people and places, and he responded with a strategy that he hoped would help people build homes and gardens that suited their needs and character. If Downing understood that people share common instincts to hunt, wander, and cultivate, and therefore appreciated the found alcove, the tent-like porch, and domestic accoutrements that improved safe and healthy operations as part of their home design, he also understood that people were different. Different character traits and different landscapes could be brought into a harmonious union when the architectural style chosen complemented that diverse identity. This recognition was distinctly American and reflected the fundamental strength of this country. It is a theory that sets aside cost as the sole factor in deciding what to build and supports the benefits of dwelling in harmony with one's individual character and the landscape's local situation. This lesson still resonates with people today in the houses they choose to make their homes.

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Continuing the Quest to Elevate the Tastes of Our People: Calvert Vaux, Frederick Clarke Withers, and Frederick Law Olmsted

Francis R. Kowsky

Butter Hill and the Highlands from Newburgh on the Hudson River, July 4, 1846. Michael Seymour. Library of Congress

There may be no better example of the power of place to shape the character and imagination of an individual than the life of Andrew Jackson Downing. In his day, the Hudson Valley landscape had become "sanctified," as David Schuyler has said, by venerating works of literature and the shimmering paintings of Hudson River School artists. Growing up in Newburgh, Downing viewed steamboats passing daily through the most picturesque and celebrated scenery in the United States. "Nowhere in America is there a more beautiful afternoon's sail than this from New York to Newburgh," wrote

one nineteenth-century Southern traveler. "Surely it is not possible for any thoughtful man or woman to journey amid such scenes as these without some gratitude to the Hand which has lavished so much loveliness upon the earth; without some recollection of the steps that lead from Nature up to Nature's God." The traveler explains that the most magnificent view on the river was from Newburgh Bay, the broad expanse of water above the northern portal of the Hudson Highlands. Here, "precipitous and desolate mountains with the blue tops of the Catskills looming grandly in the distance"[1] embrace the broad waters of the river.

This city of 10,000 laid claim to a truly exceptional situation. Located at a well-frequented ferry crossing along a major route between New England and lands to the west, Newburgh also enjoyed a fortuitous commercial situation and an admirable municipal reputation. "Everyone knows that the city is located amid scenes of the greatest historical interest and natural majesty and beauty," proclaimed an out-of-town newspaper; "Newburgh itself, as one of the most progressive and prosperous cities of the state, is worthy of its beautiful setting."[2]

Downing Park, view from the hilltop, 2015. Photo by the author

At a time when most Americans looked upon the land as a source of profit, Downing felt a spiritual pull toward nature's bounty. A generous spirit accompanied his sensitive eye; he wished to share with the entire nation the nonmaterial riches the natural world could bestow on one's life. The accumulated influence on Downing's imagination of the forces of art, literature, and landscape found its fullest expression in Highland Gardens, the long-vanished, Elizabethan-style villa he erected for himself in 1838 on six acres in the Balmville hamlet of Newburgh. "A complete embodiment of his art, it possesses a greater combination of natural beauty in its river and mountain view, and exquisite taste in its adornment, than any place in the United States, of its size," testified close friends.[3] Downing could not have inhabited a more nurturing environment for a life dedicated to writing about nature's beauty, horticulture, gardening, domestic architecture, and everything that might contribute to civilized living.[4] Downing was at

1 "The Highlands of the Hudson," *Southern Workman*, 4(June 18, 1875), 1.
2 *Troy (NY) Daily Times,* October 27, 1890.
3 "For Sale at Public Auction," *New York Daily Tribune,* September 29, 1852
4 Adam Sweeting, *Reading House and Building Books.* (Hanover, NH: University of New England Press, 1996), 3.

the height of his powers and expectations on the afternoon of July 29, 1852, when his beloved Hudson claimed his life. He was just thirty-six years old. It fell now to others who shared his vision to continue the work he had begun to improve and beautify Americans' homes and to advance the cause of parkland in the nation's towns and cities. In the years after Downing's death, three men stand out for advancing his ideals.

Calvert Vaux: "one of my family"

Two years before the *Henry Clay* disaster, a young, unknown but well-trained architect named Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) had come from London to work with Downing at Newburgh. In the summer of 1850, while on a mission to find someone to assist him in his architectural and landscape practice, Downing admired Vaux's architectural drawings at a London exhibition. He met Vaux that very day, and the two men immediately took a liking to each other. Vaux must surely have recounted to Downing his special knowledge of parks in England and on the Continent, as well as his love for rural scenery that had been informed by his reading of Repton, Gilpin, and Knight, among other writers on landscape. When Downing asked Vaux if he would like to come to America to work with him, he readily agreed. Vaux, who was twenty-six at the time, sailed for New York soon after with his new employer. In Downing, Vaux saw his own idealism reflected. Moreover, Vaux must have calculated that the older man's reputation—Downing, nine years Vaux's senior, was known in England—promised to attract many clients to the new business venture he had been invited to join.

In Newburgh, Vaux and Downing became colleagues and friends. Downing and his wife Caroline grew to regard him as a family member and were pleased to introduce him to their circle of influential acquaintances, most of whom, like themselves, were genteel idealists. In the office, there was much work to be done, for Downing had received important new commissions.[5] Vaux assisted his mentor on projects that included Matthew Vassar's Springside Estate at Poughkeepsie, Warren Delano's Algonac in Balmville, and the grandest of all: the President's Park and Public Grounds in Washington.

Although the two worked closely, Vaux knew at the time of Downing's death that he could not take his place in the hearts and minds of the American public. Vaux lacked the background to continue Downing's work in horticulture and was not inclined to forsake the drawing board for the pen to write regularly for publications about architecture and gardening. However, in future years Vaux would make significant contributions to the fledging professions of architecture and landscape architecture in his adopted land. And he never abandoned the high ideals that were at the center of Downing's legacy.

5 In addition to Vaux and Withers, we know that Downing had the assistance of Frank Jessup Scott, Clarence Cook, and his brother Charles.

Calvert Vaux continued his practice as an architect in Newburgh until moving to New York City in 1856. The next year, he published *Villas and Cottages*, a book that cataloged commissions for houses he had planned (some with the assistance of Frederick Clarke Withers, another of Downing's recruits) since Downing's death. It also included a few designs started while Downing was alive; over these, said Vaux, Downing had exercised his "genial influence." Vaux reaffirmed Downing's belief that good homes shaped good people. "And it is not for ourselves alone but for the sake of our children that we should love to build our homes . . . beautifully and well," Vaux wrote.[6] Relating well-being to nature, Vaux emphasized kinship with outdoor surroundings in his designs.

The William Findlay house in Newburgh, commissioned while Downing was alive, appeared as Design 14 in *Villas and Cottages*. Internally, Vaux laid out the rooms according to a cross-axial plan that drew the family's attention from the center of the house in four directions to window-framed landscape scenes. Vaux used the term "vista effect" to describe these views through the interior to the outside. The most engaging of all was the one from the library to the end of the hall, where one glimpsed the far-off river through the pointed-arch entry.

One of the first clients to visit Vaux's office after Downing's death was the popular writer and friend of Downing, Nathaniel Parker Willis. In 1852, Willis commissioned Idlewild, a large Gothic-style villa surveying Newburgh Bay from a pine-wooded hillside at Cornwall. The picturesque location struck Vaux as "exactly such a one, as a medieval knight would have selected for his stronghold." Vaux once again arranged the plan to suit the views. "The various windows," he said, held "a separate picture set in a frame of unfading foliage."[7]

Vaux reiterated the rhyme of house and scenery in his 1853 design for the Lydig Hoyt house at Staatsburgh. The ample dwelling assumed the moniker The Point because of its location on a rise of land protruding into the Hudson.[8] Vaux recounts in *Villas and Cottages* how he laid out the plan so the main rooms faced the spectacular westward view of the river and distant Catskills. Terraces along the house's west and north sides invited guests to step outside through floor-to-ceiling windows, the better to commune with the scenery. The Hoyt house is the personification of Vaux's dictum: "Woods, fields, mountains, and rivers will be more important than the houses that are built among them."[9]

Vaux's close association with a number of Hudson River School artists reinforced his reverence for the Hudson Valley. Among his close friends were the painters Worthington Whittredge,[10] Eastman Johnson, Frederic Church, and others with whom he enjoyed socializing at the Century Club and the Tenth Street Studio building. In 1853, Vaux had his first opportunity to design a house for an artist. Jervis McEntee (whose sister

6 Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857), 115.
7 Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, 248.
8 The house, which is in great need of repair, is now owned by the State of New York and is located on the grounds of Norrie State Park. The Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance is dedicated to its restoration.
9 Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, 55.
10 In the early 1880s, Vaux built a house for Whittredge at Summit, NJ.

Sunset, View South through the Bell Tower at Olana,
Photograph by Linda McLean, 2011

Vaux would marry in 1854) was an aspiring landscape painter who had been a pupil of Frederic Church. In exchange for a painting, Vaux furnished McEntee with plans for a small board-and-batten studio and attached cottage overlooking the Hudson in his hometown of Rondout (now part of Kingston).[11] "The scenery in the neighborhood of this cottage is of the most striking and varied description," said Vaux. Vaux was so taken with the view that he joined a hooded bench to the outside wall facing it—a quiet resting place in nature's art gallery to contemplate the vivid panorama.[12]

Seventeen years later, Vaux assisted Frederic Church as architect for Olana, the painter's splendidly autobiographical hilltop mansion at Hudson. Olana speaks in superlatives of alliance between architecture and landscape. Here the prologue of "vista effects" in Vaux's plans for the Findlay house, the McEntee studio, and The Point reached its apogee. From inside, Olana's many windows frame arresting images of distant landscapes that are evocative of Church's own canvasses.

Frederick Clarke Withers
"Gothic is a far more picturesque style than any other, and if properly built cannot fail to impart some feeling of respect and awe."

Frederick Clarke Withers (1828-1903) was the second English architect Downing hired to assist him at Highland Gardens. Withers joined the firm from London in the winter of 1852. After Downing's death, he became a partner with Vaux for a time in Newburgh.

11 The area is now part of Kingston. The house no longer stands.

12 It anticipated by three decades the stone benches Vaux and Olmsted wished placed around the Niagara Reservation for the same purpose.

Saint Luke's Episcopal Church, Beacon, NY. Photograph by Daniel Case

By 1856, the men realized they could not maintain successful architectural practices there, and both resettled in New York City, where they remained for the rest of their careers.

Like Vaux, Withers designed a number of country houses along the Hudson that embodied Downing's notion of unity between house and scenery. The Daniel B. St. John house (1856) and Daniel Clarkson house (1856), both in Balmville, are splendid surviving examples of dwellings designed to capitalize on riparian views.

Withers also would distinguish himself as one of the first architects to introduce the High Victorian Gothic Style to America. Closely associated with the writings of John Ruskin, the style harked back to Italian Gothic architecture and featured the use of red brick with black bands, contrasting stone trim, and plentiful carved ornament.

One of the earliest fully-evolved High Victorian Gothic buildings in America was Withers' 1865 Newburgh Savings Bank. Regrettably, it fell victim to the wrecker's ball during the dark days of urban renewal. Fortunately, the finest example of High Victorian Gothic in America, Withers' Jefferson Market Courthouse, still stands at the corner of Sixth Avenue and West Tenth Street in New York City. Constructed in 1874, it was voted one of the best buildings in America in 1885.[13]

While adept at planning domestic, commercial, civic, and institutional buildings, Withers would achieve fame as an outstanding architect of churches; he excelled at inventing highly sophisticated, "scholarly" ecclesiastical designs inspired by English medieval parish churches. A devout Episcopalian, he adhered to the spirit and letter of English ecclesiology, the study of medieval architecture and ritual that had its origins in the career of Augustus W. N. Pugin.

As an alumnus of Highland Gardens, Withers shared Downing's desire for "improvement in our country church architecture."[14] His first opportunity to create a fictive medieval church came in 1859, when the congregation of Calvary Presbyterian Church in Newburgh hired him to design its new house of worship.[15] If Downing had still been alive, he could have admired the handsome stone spire from his nearby home. He surely would have been pleased with how closely Withers modeled the tower on that

13 The courthouse is now the Greenwich Village branch of the New York Public Library. A market and prison that Withers designed adjacent to it were demolished.

14 "Rural Church," *Horticulturist*, 6 (May 1851), 241.

15 The congregation was known as the First Presbyterian Church when Withers designed the building. "The Ten Best Buildings," *American Architect and Building News*, 17 (13 June 1885), 282-283.

of Coe & Goodwin's Holy Trinity Church in the English town of Bracknell, a view of which Downing had offered readers of the *Horticulturist* as an example of an ideal country church.[16] Internally, Withers' church possesses a magnificent wooden-truss roof supported by graceful pointed arches. The whole design reflects the Early English and Geometric periods, as if construction had spanned many decades.

Due to the influence of two close friends of Downing's, Henry Winthrop Sargent and John Monell, Withers was able to create the *beau ideal* of a medieval English parish church across the river from Newburgh at Beacon. The two were vestrymen of St. Luke's Episcopal Church and certainly remembered Downing's complaint that most building committee members ignored the fact that the church itself could awaken devotional feelings. In 1869, they saw to it that the parish hired Withers to build its new church. St. Luke's mimics the thirteenth-century Early English style that British ecclesiologists endorsed for modern suburban parishes. Among its chief features is a recessed chancel, the sanctuary at the end of the nave that ecclesiologists demanded as the proper setting for liturgy and music.

It is the exterior, however, that one feels would have most pleased Downing, for everyone who passed by could be affected by its message. St. Luke's stands in the midst of grounds that call to mind a medieval churchyard. The shaded cemetery and picturesque stone and brick vicarage describe a scene that embodies Downing's wish to "make the country church something to become a part of the affections, and touch and better the hearts of the whole country about it."[17]

Publication of Withers' folio-sized book *Church Architecture* in 1873 and the commission he received three years later to design the Astor Memorial Reredos in New York's renowned Trinity Church solidified his place in American sacred architecture. The monumental stone altar and reredos, which feature an elaborate iconographic program, formed part of Withers' update of the entire chancel of Richard Upjohn's venerable church.

During the 1860s and 1870s, Withers also became a frequent collaborator with Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted in the firm of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, Landscape Architects. These three principal heirs to Downing's legacy constituted the nation's preeminent practice laying out grounds for public and private clients. With Olmsted and Vaux, Withers built the Arcade Building (1870) in Riverside, Illinois; the Hudson River State Hospital (1865) in Poughkeepsie; and several buildings for the Columbia Institution for the Deaf in Washington, D.C. (beginning in 1866; the present Gallaudet University).

16 "Rural Gothic Church," loc. cit.
17 A.J. Downing, "A Short Chapter on Country Churches," *Horticulturist*, 6 (January 1851), 12.

Lake and Terrace, Central Park, New York, NY.
Detroit Publishing Company, c.1905. Library of Congress

Frederick Law Olmsted
"I have been led to regard Mr. Downing as a great benefactor of our race and to desire almost above all things to do something to extend and prolong his influence."

Frederick Law Olmsted (1824-1903), who was destined to become America's foremost landscape architect, met Downing only once. Nonetheless, he felt a bond of kinship with him through his writings.

It was Downing's memory that in 1857 brought Olmsted together with Vaux in a way that would have far-reaching consequences for them and for the progress of landscape architecture in America. The year before, New York City had approved a plan for the new Central Park, an enterprise Vaux regarded as Downing's heritage. Disturbed by the banality of the original design, Vaux successfully lobbied the park commissioners to mount a competition to acquire a better plan. Vaux soon asked Olmsted, who was already employed at the park site, to collaborate with him in the preparation of a submission. He saw Olmsted as a man of taste and discernment who could also manage men and deal with politicians; he himself brought to the partnership both the skills of a professional architect and a comprehensive knowledge of landscape architecture, honed during his days with Downing. Most importantly, both men shared Downing's love of natural scenery and a desire to bring its benefits to New York City's urban population.

They won the competition and went on to create America's first large public park, a country park as they would have called it. Olmsted and Vaux's Central Park had fulfilled Downing's democratic aspiration that "the true policy of republics is to foster the taste for great public libraries, parks and gardens, which *all* may enjoy."[18]

18 Vaux and Olmsted shared equally in the design; however, architectural embellishments fell to Vaux. He was responsible for the many bridges and other structures that enhanced the Central Park landscape.

Central Park initiated a partnership between Olmsted and Vaux that would greatly advance the discipline of landscape architecture—a term they preferred to Downing's landscape gardening. During their fifteen years of affiliation, they prepared designs for public parks and landscapes in many cities. In 1865, they laid out Prospect Park in Brooklyn, their most beautiful creation. Three years later, in Buffalo, they planned America's first urban park system. At Riverside, Illinois, in 1868, they conceived an arrangement of curving, tree-lined roadways for a community of individual homeowners, fulfilling Downing's ideal of country living for American families.

In 1889, Vaux and Olmsted came together one last time to create Downing Park, a thirty-five acre memorial to Downing in Newburgh. Their sons, Downing Vaux (1856-1926) and John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920), assisted them here and would carry their fathers' work into the next century. Appropriately, Downing Park commands a superb view of Newburgh Bay and the Hudson Highlands, that sanctified landscape that had motivated the "genius of Newburgh" to appeal to his compatriots to lift their eyes from the ledger books, workbench, or pantry to picture nature's beauty and allow its charms to enhance their lives.

View from Downing Park, Newburgh, N.Y. c.1906. Souvenir Post Card Co., New York and Berlin. New City Library postcard collection

Francis R. Kowsky, SUNY Distinguished Professor Emeritus, is author of The Architecture of Frederick Clarke Withers and the Progress of the Gothic Revival in America after 1850 *(1980),* Country, Park & City: The Architecture and Life of Calvert Vaux *(1998),* The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, *and* the Buffalo Park System *(2013; 2017), and* Building Buffalo *(with Nicholas Adams, 2017).*

Grant Wood, Walker Evans, and the Twentieth-Century After-Life of Andrew Jackson Downing's Houses

Kerry Dean Carso

Fig. 1: American Gothic House, photo by Kerry Dean Carso

In the spring of 1930, the artist Grant Wood (1891-1942) accompanied a friend on a driving tour of Eldon, a small town on the Des Moines River in rural southeastern Iowa. As they approached a house on the corner of Burton and Hearn Streets, Wood exclaimed, "Stop! There's a house I want to use."[1] The object that had arrested Wood's attention was a board-and-batten house with a verandah and a pointed-arch window in its gabled façade. Built in 1881 and expanded in 1905, the Jacques House (also

1 Quoted in Nan Wood Graham with John Zug and Julie Jensen McDonald, *My Brother, Grant Wood* (Iowa City, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1993), 73. Hearn has been since renamed "American Gothic Street."

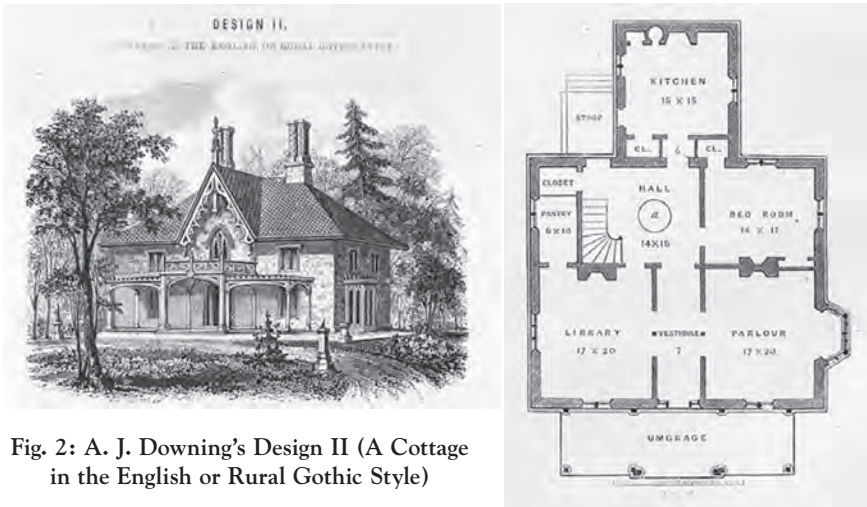

Fig. 2: A. J. Downing's Design II (A Cottage in the English or Rural Gothic Style)

known as the Dibble House), demonstrates, in its remote location, the reach of Andrew Jackson Downing's publications into the late nineteenth century.[2] While the style of the house and its vertical boarding follows Downing's advocacy for Gothic Revival cottages in rural settings, the builder deviated from some of Downing's precepts. The house sports a verandah—"indispensible" in hot weather, according to Downing—but the Iowa builder breaks one of Downing's rules regarding it. This verandah lines the entire façade of the house, rather than just a portion (fig. 1). Downing had written: "As the spirit of Gothic architecture lies in vertical lines, a long unbroken horizontal line of veranda would destroy or mar the architectural character of the cottage." For example, in Design II (A Cottage in the English or Rural Gothic Style), Downing "made the veranda two or three feet shorter at each end than the front, and [further broke] the horizontal line, by the porch balcony, to the window in the front gable" (fig. 2).[3] Also, Downing likely would have found the pointed-arch window in the little house to be over-scaled, due perhaps to its having been ordered from an architectural parts trade catalogue. In the 1880s, when the Jacques House was constructed, there were no fewer than 107 trade catalogues featuring prefabricated architectural elements.[4] Factory-produced architectural components, including doors, windows, and staircases, were available in rural Iowa after the Des Moines Valley Railroad reached Ottumwa, the nearest large town to Eldon, in 1860.[5] Eldon was accessible as well. Incorporated in

2 "Dibble House," National Register of Historic Places Report, 1974. Available at http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/text/74002291.PDF.

3 Andrew Jackson Downing, *Cottage Residences; or, A Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas and their Gardens and Grounds Adapted to North America* (1842; fifth edition, 1873 edited by George E. Harney; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1981), 43.

4 Daniel Reiff, *Houses from Books: Treatises, Pattern Books, and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738-1950: A History and Guide* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 121.

5 John Reichard House, State Route 92 vicinity, Knoxville, Marion County, IA, Historic American Building Survey, HABS IOWA,63-KNOX.V,1-, 3. Available at http://cdn.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/ia/ia0000/ia0092/data/ia0092data.pdf.

1872, the town owes its existence to the arrival of the Keokuk and Des Moines Valley Railway, followed by the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad.[6]

The plan of the Jacques House falls short of Downing's standards as well. Downing writes that, "The principal entrance or front door should never open directly into an apartment of any kind, but always into a porch, lobby, or entry of some kind" to prevent drafts and protect the inhabitants' privacy.[7] This is not the case in the Iowa house, in which the door leads directly into the parlor. Indeed, with its awkward proportions and lengthy porch, Downing probably would have classified this house as among the rural cottages designed by "uneducated builders," as he describes them in *The Architecture of Country Houses*.[8]

Whatever its deficiencies by Downing's standards, Wood was eager to adapt the house for his own purposes. He made a sketch (fig. 3) and later explained his intention of capturing the house for a painting he completed in 1930. He wrote, "Any northern town old enough to have some buildings dating back to the Civil War is liable to have a house or church in the American Gothic style. I simply invented some American Gothic people to stand in front of a house of this type."[9] The result was Wood's celebrated painting *American Gothic*, which won a $300 prize in 1930 and entered the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago (fig. 4). Newspapers across the country reproduced *American Gothic* within their pages, and the painting's fame has only increased over

Fig. 3: Grant Wood. American, 1892-1942. Sketch for house in *American Gothic* (1930). Oil on paperboard. 12.63 in. x 14.63 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Park and Phyllis Rinard. 1991.122.2R-V

6 Capt. S. B. Evans, ed., *History of Wapello County, Iowa and Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1901), 139.

7 Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850; New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), 44.

8 Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 41.

9 Grant Wood, "He Himself Explains 'American Gothic,' Letter to the Editor, "The Sunday *Register's* Open Forum," *Des Moines Register*, Dec. 21, 1930, available at http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/grantwood/id/1030/show/911/rec/15

the years, with numerous parodies of the stern couple and their farmhouse.

Interestingly, Gothic Revival houses make fairly frequent appearances in American art and visual culture in the interwar years. The most famous example is *American Gothic*, but there are others such as the photograph *Gothic Revival House with Iron Gate, Poughkeepsie, New York* (1930-31) by Walker Evans (1903-1975). This essay will examine the "after-life" of so-called Victorian architecture in the 1920s and 1930s, arguing that Downing's influence continued into the twentieth century through the survival of houses influenced by his publications. These extant houses became a compelling subject of interest as the Victorian Revival got underway. Today, architectural historians are much more specific in labeling the many different non-classical styles of domestic architecture—from Queen Anne to Second Empire Baroque and everything in between—in the long period of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). But circa 1930, critics, historians, and artists such as Wood used the catchall term "Victorian" liberally. As styles changed, nineteenth-century American architecture was lambasted and subjected to decay and demolition. But attitudes began to shift in the 1920s and 1930s, at the height of the Colonial Revival, with articles in arts journals grudgingly calling for an interest in Victorian objects. By the end of the 1930s, Victoriana had become fashionable, according to an announcement about an exhibition on Victorian and Edwardian dresses in the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art:*

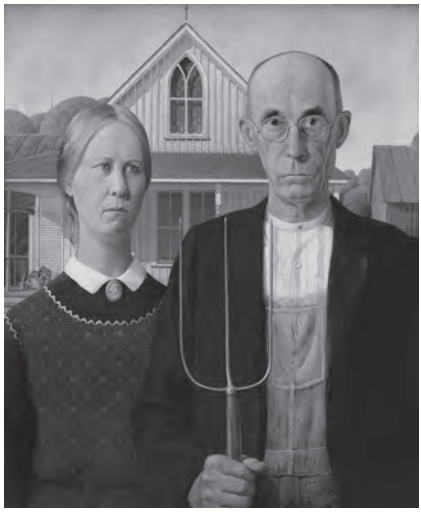

Fig. 4: Grant Wood. American, 1892-1942. © VAGA, NY. *American Gothic* (1930). Oil on Beaver Board. 30.75 x 25.75 in. (78 x 65.3 cm). Friends of American Art Collection, 1930.934. The Art Institute of Chicago/Art Resource, NY

> For over a decade now there has been an increasing tendency to appreciate and, as a result, to preserve the furniture and other decorative arts of the Victorian era. This has, indeed, progressed to a point where the creation of pseudo-Victorian interiors is on occasion to be encountered. The revival has, therefore, arrived at a fashionable stage. [10]

Grant Wood had participated in this Victorian Revival. Wood had worked as an interior decorator earlier in his career, and in 1935 he transformed a second-floor

10 "A Special Exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian Dresses," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 34 (March 1939), 55. Quoted in Anthony Burton, "The Revival of Interest in Victorian Decorative Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum," in Miles Taylor and Michael Wolff, eds., *The Victorians since 1901: Histories, Representations and Revisions* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press), 2004, 134.

room above a restaurant in Iowa City into a Victorian parlor and dining room for the tongue-in-cheek organization "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Speakers" at the University of Iowa. The group had formed in response to a lack of proper venues for entertaining out-of-town speakers. Wood called the room's decoration "the worst style of the Victorian period," in a nod perhaps to the period's detractors, although the art historian Wanda Corn has called the room a "lovingly and carefully executed piece of work." Guests, some grinning and others appropriately dour, dressed up for neo-Victorian photographs.[11]

Corn has argued that the Victorian Revival was a parallel to the contemporaneous Colonial Revival, but it presented an alternative. For Wood, it was personal, as the style of architecture and interior decoration likely reminded him of his youth in the 1890s in Anamosa, Iowa. Upon the death of his father in 1901, Wood had moved with his family to Cedar Rapids at the age of ten. Corn writes:

> But having experienced a bifurcated life, ten years on a farm followed by thirty in Cedar Rapids, Wood recognized that the insular, rural world into which he had been born was slowly disappearing, that in his own lifetime the telephone, tractor, automobile, radio, and cinema were bringing that era to an end.[12]

As Corn has argued, Iowans had no colonial past, and so their Victorian heritage presented a substitute. Wood had spent his early years in a Victorian farmhouse about four miles up the road from the town of Anamosa. His father had built the house in 1885, around the time the Jacques House was constructed.[13] Both dwellings are vernacular concoctions with pointed gables.

But the Victorian Revival was not limited to the Midwestern United States; the Victorian Revival was prevalent on the long-settled East Coast as well. Indeed, the landscapes of New England and New York were rich with Victorian buildings, a circumstance that inspired Lincoln Kirstein to compile a photographic survey of nineteenth-century architecture with the help of architect John Brooks Wheelwright and photographer Walker Evans in 1931.[14] Kirstein was a founder at Harvard of the literary magazine *Hound and Horn* and later co-founded the New York City Ballet. An amateur architectural historian, he was fascinated with nineteenth-century vernacular architecture in the vicinity of Boston and taught Evans to value these neglected buildings. Evans later said, "I'm interested in what's called vernacular. For example, finished, I mean educated,

11 Wanda M. Corn, *Grant Wood: The Regionalist Vision* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1983), 44-6.

12 Wanda Corn, "The Birth of a National Icon: Grant Wood's American Gothic," in *Art the Ape of Nature: Studies in Honor of H. W. Janson* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), 761.

13 Grant Wood, *Return from Bohemia: A Painter's Story,* Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Reel no. D24, 19. Wood's secretary and friend Park Rinard wrote this autobiography with Wood. Corn, *Grant Wood: The Regionalist Vision,* 112.

14 Evans wrote about the project with Kirstein: "It's something I wouldn't have done myself . . . It was chiefly because of Kirstein, and it was a perfectly respectable thing to do, that is, documenting architecture. And it taught me a lot. In fact, it introduced me to a knowledge of how to appreciate and love and respond to various kinds of architecture and architectural styles." Robert O. Ware, "Walker Evans: The Victorian House Project, 1930-1931," Masters Thesis, The University of New Mexico, 1989, 24.

architecture doesn't interest me, but I love to find American vernacular."[15] In 1933, Kirstein curated an exhibition of thirty-nine photographs of Victorian architecture by Evans at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the result of their excursions in search of old buildings in New England and New York.[16] Kirstein announced the exhibition *Walker Evans: Photographs of Nineteenth-Century Houses,* in the *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* and explained how they located the buildings: "These houses were found by searching in an automobile with the photographic equipment in the rumble, wherever Evans chanced to be for a sufficient length of time . . . It is a painfully haphazard method limited by time, money and insufficient information." Evans returned to some buildings repeatedly in order to find the "brilliant sunlight" he favored, with no shadows from trees or other buildings; he took the photographs only in spring and autumn.[17] We imagine him, like Grant Wood, shouting "Stop!" to his mates when he spotted a house to photograph.

On a visit to Poughkeepsie, Evans discovered such a house. Despite overcast skies and his predilection for bright sunshine, Evans documented the house with his camera.[18] *Gothic Gate Cottage Near Poughkeepsie, New York* (1930-31; fig. 5) shows a Carpenter Gothic house, with multiple gables, pinnacles, vergeboard, hood moldings, diamond-paned lancet-arch windows, and the ubiquitous verandah. Known in the twentieth century as the "Pink House," the James Winslow Gatehouse stood on Route 9

Fig. 5: Gothic Cottage near Poughkeepsie, New York, Walker Evans, 1931, Gelatin silver print, 15.7 x 19.8 cm (6 3/16 x 7 13/16 in.) The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program

15 Quoted in Ware, 36.

16 Of the more than 100 photographs Evans took for this project, thirty-nine were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art for three weeks between November 16 and December 8, 1933. Ware, 80-81, footnote #6.

17 Lincoln Kirstein, "Walker Evans' Photographs of Victorian Architecture," *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin,* Dec. 1, 1933 (I:4), 4.

18 Belinda Rathbone, *Walker Evans: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1995), 69. Thank you to my colleague Bill Rhoads for identifying the house in Evans' photograph for me.

opposite the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery from its erection in the mid-nineteenth century until the roadway was widened in 1961. Benjamin West Frazier, a key player in the dismantling and relocation of Boscobel from Westchester County to Garrison in 1956, acquired the gatehouse from the state and took the house apart, measuring, numbering, and photographing each piece so it could be reconstructed at a later date. (A fire destroyed these records in 1966 and a barn collapse had exposed the house components to the elements at the time *The New York Times* published an article on Frazier and his rescue attempt in 1976.)[19] The fate of the gatehouse highlights the ephemeral quality of these old houses. In his MoMA announcement, Kirstein recognized the peril of nineteenth-century Victorian architecture, writing, "These wooden houses disintegrate, almost, between snaps of the lens. Many shown in these photographs no longer stand."[20] Indeed, Kirstein's project was explicitly documentary. He wrote:

> Photography is in essence a scientifically accurate process for the reproduction of objective appearances, a stationary magic that fixes a second from time's passage on a single plane. Its greatest service is documentary.
>
> Walker Evans' photographs are such perfect documents that their excellence is not assertive. In his series of American Federal and Victorian architecture, taken over the last four years, he is providing illustrations for a monumental history of the American art of building in its most imaginative and impermanent period.[21]

Significantly, Kirstein and Evans' project predates the work done beginning in 1933 for the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a National Park Service program aimed at both documenting early American architecture and putting to work unemployed architects to photograph, measure, and research these buildings during the Great Depression. Indeed, HABS was chartered the month Evans' MoMA exhibition opened in 1933.[22] MoMA's press release about the Evans exhibition describes the subject of the show as "the history of a seldom studied phase of American architecture, the unjustly ridiculed houses of the Italian villa school, the Gothic Revival and the mansard roof." The release goes on to quote Kirstein, who describes this as the "fantastic, imaginative and impermanent period" in American history.[23]

While many of the houses documented by Evans relate only superficially to Downing's designs, he photographed at least one house with a stronger link to Downing: the Angier House (fig. 6), designed by Downing and his architectural collaborator Alexander Jackson Davis in 1842-3 in Medford, Massachusetts (the house is not in Somerville, as mistakenly inscribed on the print). As David Schuyler has pointed out, the Angier House resembles quite closely Design II from Downing's *Cottage*

19 Richard Severo, "Rains, Winds and Time Erode a 'Saved' Pink Cottage," *New York Times*, April 1, 1976, 33. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/1976/04/01/archives/rains-winds-and-time-erode-a-saved-pink-cottage-rains-winds-and.html?_r=0.

20 Kirstein, 4.

21 Kirstein, 4.

22 Judith Keller, *Walker Evans: The Getty Museum Collection* (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1995), 11.

23 Museum of Modern Art, Press Release, Nov. 15, 1933. Available on-line at https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/149/releases/MoMA_1933-34_0016_1933-11-15.pdf.

Fig. 6: The Angier House (Gothic House, Somerville, Massachusetts), Walker Evans, 1931, Gelatin silver print, 17.3 x 22.5 cm (6 13/16 x 8 7/8 in.) The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Residences (fig. 2).[24] Well-maintained at the time of Evans' photograph (and still extant today), the Angier House appears lifeless, as do Evans' other Victorian houses, except in this case the open door hints at possible use, as if an occupant has just stepped in or out. Such ambiguity can be eerie. Indeed, in Evans' photograph of the Poughkeepsie house (fig. 5), the lighting is otherworldly and even spooky, attributes that act as a foil to the cottage's gingerbread pleasantry. Downing, of course, did not intend his houses to be Gothic in the literary sense; as historian Adam Sweeting notes, "Downing . . . sought to evoke a mood diametrically opposed to Poe's by cleansing the terror from the latter's conception of Gothic. In place of Gothic horror, he called for an architecture that retained the shadows and gables but endowed them with the power to soothe."[25] But some twentieth-century interpretations of the old houses, Walker Evans' in particular, highlight the ghostly quality of what had become, by 1930, forlorn architecture.[26]

As for Grant Wood, his experience of the Gothic Revival in Iowa is filtered through his exposure to authentic medieval architecture in Europe, rather than through

24 David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 76-77. See also Jane B. Davies, "Davis and Downing: Collaborators in the Picturesque," in *Prophet with Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing 1815-1852* (Washington, DC: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia and Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989), 92-3. The Angier House sports a long verandah, although Downing had advised against long horizontal lines in Gothic Revival houses. Downing, *Cottage Residences,* 43.

25 Adam Sweeting, *Reading Houses and Building Books: Andrew Jackson Downing and the Architecture of Popular Antebellum Literature, 1835-1855* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1996), 54-55.

26 See Barnaby Haran, "Homeless Houses: Classifying Walker Evans's Photographs of Victorian Architecture," *Oxford Art Journal,* 33:2 (2010), 189-210 and Sarah Burns, "'Better for Haunts': Victorian Houses and the Modern Imagination," *American Art* 26:3 (Fall 2012), 2-25.

Downing's writings on the Gothic Revival. Wood went to Paris in 1920 and traveled through France and Italy for 14 months in 1923-24. He returned to Paris in 1926 and in late 1928 spent three months in Munich, supervising the creation of stained glass for his window at the Cedar Rapids Veterans Memorial Building. While abroad, Wood was fascinated with thresholds, and Gothic pointed-arch openings were a theme in his art during this time. Another influence on Wood was the architect, Arts and Crafts designer, and Ruskin devotee, Ernest Batchelder, whose articles Wood had read in *The Craftsman*.[27] Batchelder's opinion on nineteenth-century Gothic Revival architecture is scathing. He writes:

> And . . . it is the utter lack of imagination that makes all modern adaptations of Gothic architecture incapable of awakening a spark of enthusiasm . . . in our modern adaptations there is neither interest nor reason in the arbitrary disposition of details in cement and plaster, in papier-mâché and cast iron. We have a husk without meat; a body into which no soul can be conjured to take its abode.[28]

Surely, Wood's exposure to Batchelder's ideas about the difference between European Gothic and the "modern adaptations" of the style influenced his experience of the Gothic Revival cottage in Eldon. Still, Wood found these "American Gothic" houses fascinating, as he believed they derived directly from the European Gothic. His sister Nan later wrote, "Grant had long been intrigued by the arched Gothic windows copied from the massive stone cathedrals of Europe and placed in frame houses in rural Iowa."[29]

Indeed, Wood does not see these Gothic Revival cottages as importations from English architecture (which they were), but as uniquely American adaptations of medieval European Gothic church architecture. He does not appear to be familiar with John Claudius Loudon or Downing or the pattern books of the nineteenth century. Hence, the title of his painting is *American Gothic,* as opposed to French, German, or English Gothic. After viewing European architecture on his travels, Wood returned to his native Iowa. Choosing the Jacques House as a subject for his painting underscored his desire, expressed in his book *Revolt Against the City* (1935), to turn "introspective," because he saw these structures as uniquely American.[30] He later stated, "Our cardboard frame houses on Iowa farms are especially suggestive of the Middle Western civilization."[31] At the end of his biography on Downing, David Schuyler notes that "later generations of builders and residents have long since forgotten Downing's name," but the "thousands of cottages and farmhouses . . ." that "display the central gable and veranda, ornamental brackets, board-and-batten construction, or other elements of

27 James M. Dennis, *Grant Wood: A Study in American Art and Culture* (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), 19-20. Robert Winter states that Wood probably did not study directly with Batchelder. Robert Winter, *Batchelder, Tilemaker* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1999), 22, 109 (footnote #25).

28 Ernest A. Batchelder, *Design in Theory and Practice* (1910; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920), 151-2.

29 Graham, 73.

30 Grant Wood, "Revolt Against the City," 1935, reprinted in Dennis, 229. Wood's University of Iowa colleague Frank Luther Mott collaborated with Wood on *Revolt Against the City.* See Corn, *Grant Wood: The Regionalist Vision,* 153, footnote #85.

31 Quoted in R. Tripp Evans, *Grant Wood: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 91.

residential design he popularized" are a testament to his influence.[32] Wood is seemingly one of those residents who had long since forgotten Downing.

But for those of us who do remember Downing, the Jacques House in Iowa is a reminder of his far-flung influence. The house has been renamed the "American Gothic House," and a visitor center has been constructed nearby to cater to tourists wanting their picture taken in front of the little structure. While most visitors to the American Gothic House are assuredly unaware of Downing and the pattern book tradition of the nineteenth century, the house itself serves as a tangible reminder of his widespread influence well beyond his death in 1852. That Wood and Evans took note of these old houses, and in Evans' case documented their decay, suggests nostalgia for the "smiling lawns and tasteful cottages" promoted by Downing long ago. [33]

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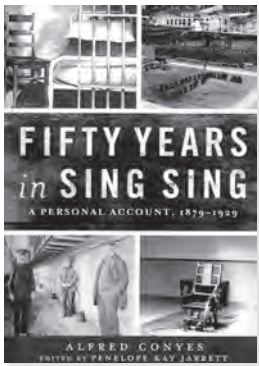
32 Schuyler, 229.
33 Downing, "Preface," *The Architecture of Country Houses,* v.

Book Reviews



***Fifty Years in Sing Sing: A Personal Account, 1879-1929,* Alfred Conyes, ed. Penelope Kay Jarrett. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015) 200 pp.**

"Guards," Ted Conover writes in the Foreword to *Fifty Years in Sing Sing*, "know the world of prison intimately, yet few have written books" (xi). Conover's observation is quite correct. This makes the narrative of Alfred Conyes, who served as a guard at Sing Sing for fifty years, all the more worthwhile because it offers the reader a window into the workings of the prison. Reflecting on the changes that occurred in Sing Sing during his tenure, Conyes writes, "I have seen many changes in prison administration and discipline. It is clear that modern methods are far more effective than those used in the era of the striped suits, ball and chain, lock-step, and physical torture" (xxiii). Although Conyes wrote his narrative in 1930, it was never published and remained in manuscript form until discovered by Penelope Kay Jarrett among her mother's effects. Jarrett recognized the value of Conyes' account and published it, along with some notes and a series of interesting images, in an accessible and affordable volume.

This account is a valuable primary source for several reasons. For one, as previously mentioned, it is one of the few written by a prison guard. Conyes was not a dissatisfied dilettante who only lasted a couple of months, but rather a grizzled veteran of fifty years. In addition, the very fact that Conyes served such a long time renders his account all the more useful because he witnessed important transformations in how prisons were administered and in how prisoners were supposed to be punished and rehabilitated. Finally, Conyes' account blends the history of Sing Sing and the time he spent within its walls with his ruminations on prisons, prisoners, rehabilitation, and correction. He writes, "Prisons are not only places for punishment, but also for correction and training," and "the main object of prisons is to make law-abiding men out of those who have previously broken the statutes. The task is not easy, but neither is it hopeless" (xxv). At times, Conyes seems to fluctuate between despondency and hopelessness. Thus, his account not only offers a detailed discussion of how a prison functioned, but also how prisons could impact the people who served as guards and administrators.

Conyes opens with a humorous account of how he had to "break in" to the prison. In other words, in a pre-civil service reform era, Conyes had to enlist the aid of several politicians to secure a patronage job as a prison guard. Before serving in Sing Sing, he worked for several years at Clinton Prison in upstate New York. Conyes admired the warden, but disliked Clinton, writing, "to this day, the worst convicts are sent to

Clinton. When a man shows signs of rebellion, all we have to do is mention sending him to Clinton. That is enough, for the men fear Clinton Prison more than anything else" (9). The reader cannot help but be stunned by Conyes' terrifying description of Clinton. "We had to be stern, and at time, cruel," he writes; "back then the main purpose of punishment was to break the men down physically and mentally. Many were unable to stand prison life and either went mad or committed suicide" (11). Conyes describes a world of terrible food ("how human beings could eat such stuff and live had remained a mystery to me" [11]); hard labor; extremely small cells ("the smallest area in which men have ever been imprisoned in this country" [12]); lack of indoor plumbing; and overcrowding. Conyes also discussed the ghastly (his word) punishments inflicted on prisoners. He concludes that the "horrific tales" of prison life he heard as a civilian "were not exaggerated in the slightest" (11).

After two years at Clinton, Conyes made arrangements to transfer to Sing Sing. While he wanted to be nearer to his parents, he also admired the fact that "Sing Sing was considered the model penal institution" (18-19). Important to note is the fact that Conyes is not writing a sensationalistic "tell-all" account from the perspective of a disgruntled employee. Rather, he writes as a "company man" and often goes out of his way to praise the prison and its administrators. Sing Sing, writes Conyes, "is a model twentieth-century penal institution which takes the very dregs of society, purging and refining them with the result that it advances, rather than retards, the upward movement of humanity" (21). The daily lives of prisoners, while not extravagant, were certainly better than at Clinton. As one might imagine in a story about prisons, Conyes does not fail to discuss both successful and unsuccessful escape attempts. No doubt there are gaps and omissions in his account, but Conyes tells a series of fascinating stories about the prison, the people, and the travails and challenges of his job. At one point, he was in charge of the stone yard and the convict laborers declared they were on strike because they did not get enough food. Despite sympathizing with their point, Conyes ordered them back to work. When some of the men returned to work and others refused, a melee ensued. Conyes waded in with his baton and, in his words "it was a hot time for a few minutes" (56). Conyes later spoke to the stone contractor and induced him to pay the prisoners extra for overtime work. Afterwards, the prisoners thanked Conyes because they assumed he kept them from killing each other. It is hard not to be disappointed about Conyes' spare language. How, after all, did one guard with a baton face down several dozen men armed with picks?

Conyes devotes much of his narrative to discussing capital punishment and witnessing people put to death. During his tenure at Sing Sing, New York abolished death by hanging in favor of electrocution. Conyes concludes that "capital punishment has been and, no doubt, will always be a source of the keenest argument" (74), but he argues that "the chair has set very little example because of the provision in the law that all executions must be practically private. One rarely even sees the chair until he is to be executed in it. The greatest majority of the people know nothing about it, and

because of that fact, little do they care" (75). Conyes also reveals the part he played in the execution of Martha M. Place, "the first woman in the world to die by the electric current" (109), whom he escorted to the chair. Conyes concludes ambiguously: While he asserts that "it has been my privilege to bear my share for over half a century in a procession of betterment, a march often halting and always difficult, but nevertheless, constantly upward year by year from the depths of a cold, cruel, and bloody barbarism" (164), he also admits he would not want to repeat his career as a prison guard, if given the choice.

Conyes is a fascinating figure. Anyone reading his account will come away with the sense that he was, by and large, a humane guard. Still, there were moments when his responses to prisoners seemed out of proportion to their offense. In addition, despite personal disinclination, Conyes nevertheless had to follow the rules and harshly discipline prisoners. The few times Conyes mentions African-American prisoners he has a tendency to employ dialect, but, on the whole, he does not seem to be interested in offering any sustained discussion of race or ethnicity. Conyes indicts public schools and social agencies for failing "to train our youth for adequate vocations" (162), and he considers this the true basis for delinquency and crime. It would have been nice to see some of these points framed within the historiography. It is also important to note that there are gaps in this account; it should not be regarded as a "tell-all" about the time Conyes spent in Sing Sing or even a complete picture of life in the prison. Conyes wrote about the areas he knew best, and even then he could not cover the totality of a fifty-year career. However, despite certain flaws and limitations, this is a useful and interesting book that will certainly appeal to anyone interested in the history of prisons, prison reform, and New York history more generally.

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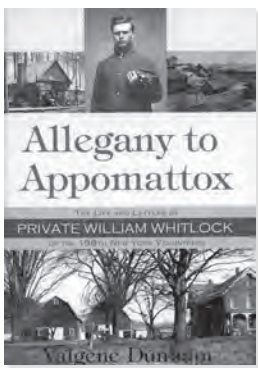


***Allegany to Appomattox: The Life and Letters of Private William Whitlock of the 188th New York Volunteers*, Valgene Dunham, foreword by Bill Potter. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2013) 254 pp.**

In 1978 the great-great-grandson of a Union veteran was exploring an old family farmhouse outside Allegany, in western New York, when he struck gold. He came upon thirty-nine letters by his forebear, Private William Whitlock, composed in late 1864 and early 1865 during his time as a member of the 188th New York Volunteers (xvii). Another of Whitlock's great-great-grandsons, Valgene Dunham, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Coastal Carolina University, has undertaken to contextualize and interpret this

valuable source in his first historical monograph, *Allegany to Appomattox*. A molecular biologist by trade, Dr. Dunham seeks to "tell the story of a thirty-five-year-old farmer-lumberman, husband, and father of four children" who enlisted in September 1864 and was killed the following February at the Battle of Hatcher's Run, Virginia, "as a 'travelougue' so that the reader may see what Will saw or could have seen during his service to the country" (xviii).

In his brief but elegant foreword, Bill Potter of the American History Guild identifies one of Dunham's key contributions: "He senses the disruption of the timeless rhythms of the agrarian life by the call to war to preserve the Union" (xvi). Indeed, this is a strength of the book: approaching the war through Whitlock's letters reveals his intense, enduring interest in events back on the farm, concern over the well-being of his wife Lide and their family, and an understandable urgency to receive frequent updates from home (26). His letters provide insight into the nation's transportation network (38) as well as life in the trenches, which Dunham aptly summarizes as "an ever-swinging pendulum between sheer boredom and sheer terror" (69). There is a sweetness in these letters—a charm in the misspellings and the mundane concerns of the writer, both revealing the humanity that can be forgotten when studying a war in which the fate of the union, the meaning of liberty, and the liberation of nearly four million slaves were at stake.

While this book will be of definite interest for Civil War specialists and hobbyists, it is not recommended for students for several reasons. A minor but persistent problem is confusing notations: sometimes embedded citations, sometimes footnotes—sometimes both on one page.

A more serious reservation relates to the book's intense interpretive favoritism toward the very forces its main subject volunteered to fight. Dunham is candid on this point: "My life in the southern United States for more than a quarter of a century has influenced discussions that include both the Union and the Confederate sides of the conflict. Contextual information . . . certainly reflect my 'southern exposure'" (xviii). Fair enough, but there are moments when the reader is left to question whether this "exposure" infected Dunham's analysis. This includes consideration of the armies themselves: Union soldiers are portrayed as obscene, gambling drunkards with a penchant for prostitutes whose officers were either bloodthirsty or incompetent (*e.g.*: 124-126, 132-133); meanwhile, the Confederates are consistently portrayed as romantic heroes in the "Lost Cause" mold whose behavior was more dignified since "Southerners of the 1860s were church oriented in most aspects of their lives" (134). That particular conclusion seems to ignore the power of the Second Great Awakening in the North, including among those most appalled by antebellum Southern Society, perhaps those especially in upstate New York. Indeed, the antebellum history provided for context is at times troubling, especially in chapter two, where the Old South and the formation of the Confederacy are given nearly uncritical, almost celebratory treatment. This is

partially a reflection of secondary sources. While there is ample use of James McPherson and a passing reference to the work of David Donald, many of the classic and contemporary works on the antebellum period and the Civil War are neglected—no Blight, Craven, Faust, Fehrenbacher, Foner, Potter, or even Doris Kearns Goodwin, to name a few. In their place, a commendably wide reading of lesser-known works and a surfeit of internet sources—some valuable, some less so.

Despite some deficiencies, Dr. Dunham's work will be useful for Civil War enthusiasts, and his presentation of these letters is a valuable contribution to our understanding of soldiers' lives during the conflict. Indeed, this book and the letters from which it draws offer valuable insights from the unique perspective of a mature, family-oriented Northern volunteer whose priorities within the theater of battle very humanly reflect his particular world view: "Lide no one wants them to give up eny worse than I do for I tel you I want to come home and enjoy peace and quiet once more. but I shal have to wate and se what time will bring forth. if I had no family I could get along very well but Lide there is no place like home" (206).

Robert Chiles, University of Maryland

***Saratoga Springs: A Centennial History*, Field Horne, editor in chief. (Kiskatom Publishing, 2015). 404 pp.**

Saratoga Springs is both a renowned destination and an enduring community. The city is both special, in its identity as a resort since the turn of the nineteenth century, and typical, in experiencing the problems of urban centers, small and large, during the twentieth. Field Horne as editor in chief and a team of twenty-five expert authors produced *Saratoga Springs: A Centennial History* on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the city's incorporation. This book succeeds both as a local history and as an examination of some larger themes and issues in American urban life.

Saratoga Springs is clearly and logically organized. Nine chapters tell "The Saratoga Story" chronologically, from its origins as a mineral springs resort to the "modern" era of flawed urban renewal and community re-invention. Following chapters discuss particular topics—people, economy, community, schools and colleges, and the "place" itself (including village and city government). Most of the stories are brought up to the present, unlike so many other local histories. Chapters are generally concise, yet enhanced with personal observations or recollections. Archival records produced important new information (for example about land development and public schools) not available in published sources.

As in any collaborative work, some topics are slighted—was no author found? The omissions include banking and public safety during the twentieth century, also medical and hospital care in all periods, except for the remarkable story of how women founded the Saratoga Springs hospital. Offsetting such omissions are strong chapters on women "at home" and "at work," and on Saratoga's African-American and Jewish communities.

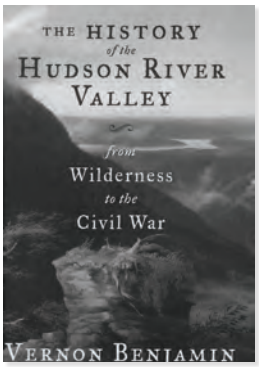
Despite its numerous authors, the book has unifying themes, always linked to the history of the city. Among them are the therapeutic allure of mineral waters; the glamor and transience of horse racing; the political tensions between vice (especially gambling interests) and virtue (civic pride and prestige); and the critical advantages of new transportation facilities (the railroads of the 1830s, the Northway of the 1960s). A major theme in the early twentieth century is the long decline of the hotel industry (the infrastructure was always overbuilt). That is followed by the remarkable stories of a revived city center and the transformation of the local economy in the late twentieth century into a year-round resort and cultural and educational center. The result is a new era of gentrification that is making housing in Saratoga Springs unaffordable for many long-time residents.

As this book tells it, the most successful promoters of Saratoga Springs have been land developers and resort proprietors in the nineteenth century, and civic leaders in the twentieth. Local government officials are less prominent and partisan politics is largely absent in the story as presented. The effectiveness of the city's unusual commission form of government is not assessed. However, local government's management of complex problems is analyzed revealingly in chapters on school consolidation in the 1950s and 1960s, and on the associated movements of urban renewal and historic preservation from the 1940s to the present.

Saratoga Springs: A Centennial History is capably edited and beautifully produced. Typographical and grammatical errors are practically non-existent. The notes, bibliography, and index complement the text. The book is elegantly designed in ample quarto format. It has superior illustrations and ten excellent maps by Martha Costello. The book prominently acknowledges the people and organizations whose support made its publication possible.

This excellent community history will of course interest Saratoga Springs residents. Substantial parts of it also will instruct those who are concerned about the past and future of American resorts and of smaller cities of the Hudson Valley and far beyond.

James D. Folts, New York State Archives



***The History of the Hudson River Valley: From the Civil War to Modern Times*, Vernon Benjamin. (New York: The Overlook Press, 2016) 625 pp.**

This lengthy book covers a plethora of information and provides the reader with an easily readable overview of the Hudson River Valley from the Civil War era to the present. Vernon Benjamin defines the region of study as between various mountain ranges on the eastern and western edges of the river between Lake George and the Narrows. This incredibly diverse area includes cities, towns, suburbs, farmland, country estates, factories, docks, hills, dells, lakes, reservoirs and streams. The book's ambitious accomplishment is to incorporate so much information in a single volume, and with a fast-paced writing style. Its emphasis is largely cultural, with significant attention paid to artistic movements and important figures in American life. Key sites, events and trends are covered. The author tends to favor people of power, influence, and money, however, and we learn relatively little about the ordinary people of the Hudson River Valley, whether farmers, workers, middle-class suburbanites, immigrants, or ethnic groups. Benjamin has written an impressive work of historical synthesis yet presents only a partial history of the region.

The author divides the book into six roughly chronological sections, each with a witty heading meant to evoke the era under discussion and useful epigraphs atop each of the forty-six chapters. "The Age of Sheen" discusses Gilded Age developments, especially the construction of robber baron estates along the river. Other than an initial overview of agricultural production in the immediate postwar period, this section is really about the rich and famous. Institutional histories of regional colleges are included, as is the political rise of Theodore Roosevelt and transportation via steamboat and railroad. Readers learn very little about the industrial revolution or the environmental and human costs of factory production in this era.

Section II, "Twilight of the Gods," does a better job addressing the extractive industries—lumber, stone, and sand—that helped the valley to thrive during the late-nineteenth century. Sections on the development of reservoirs and municipal water supplies are particularly noteworthy, even if they occupy many more pages than does the discussion of industrial production in places such as Troy. (The important arsenal at Watervliet merits scant mention.) Politics and the social costs of World War I round out the section.

"Everything Gone Crazy" constitutes the book's third section and begins with a thorough discussion of naturalist John Burroughs, who also receives attention in several other parts of the book. Benjamin rightly connects transportation changes with the rise of tourism, and posits that increased interest in the region led to environmentalism and a flowering of intellectual movements based in the Hudson River Valley, such as

those influenced by meetings at Troutbeck. The artists' retreat at Yaddo keeps popping up in the book and may be given more attention than it deserves in terms of historical impact. Once again the author reminds us of the many colleges in the Hudson River Valley and discusses their role in reform movements.

Section IV, "The Age of Roosevelt," devotes almost all of its pages to the Delano and Roosevelt families and their two most famous members, Eleanor and Franklin. Certainly their influence on the region and nation is significant, but a more critical appraisal of their actions might be in order. This section seems to follow the "great man" theory of history and spends relatively little time discussing how the Great Depression affected valley residents other than the Roosevelts and their social whirl. Lowell Thomas is mentioned, but not factory workers in any of the dozens of river towns or hardscrabble farmers from the hills. Chapter 30, on World War II, does a fine job chronicling the home front and the role ordinary residents played in defeating fascism.

"The Postwar Years," Section V, finally brings readers to the broader social and economic changes that were shaping the valley. New suburban developments and highways coupled with massive commercial and industrial developments resulted in an economic boom. Relevant statistics and perceptive discussion of New York State's development of the Thruway make this among the book's best sections. Likewise, discussion of postwar radicalism, modern feminism, and "the heritage revolution" offer insightful discussions of important cultural developments in the Hudson River Valley.

Section VI is titled "Modern Times" and brings the book to its close. Nelson Rockefeller receives star treatment and is seen as the major force in late twentieth-century New York. This is a reasonable argument, but privileges a single individual over the broader forces of social and economic change that shaped the era. Woodstock, both the event and the artistic vibe around the village, seem to rise from the landscape rather than being part of radical transformations in American society. On page 485 the history of African-Americans finally merits extended treatment, although more pages are devoted to the career of Mike Tyson and the sensational Tawana Brawley episode than more mundane matters such as mass incarceration or the decline of factory work that drew the postwar wave of African-Americans to the valley in the first place. A more complex discussion of race in modern America would be useful, especially regarding the increasingly black and brown cities such as Albany and Poughkeepsie in contrast with the almost wholly white rural parts of the Hudson River Valley. Important events leading to the modern environmental movement, like Storm King and the *Clearwater*, appear in this section alongside the less important career of public radio impresario Alan Chartock. In the section's closing chapters Benjamin makes a compelling argument that by the early twenty-first century the Hudson River Valley had come to appreciate its natural setting and its residents became strong advocates of environmental protection, especially after the discovery of PCBs in the river. There are of course those who opposed the cleanup and favored economic development, yet their voices are largely absent from this section. Again, the working class, small city,

and rural residents of the valley receive less attention than wealthier citizens with access to power and the media. The difference in perspective between Fort Edward and Peekskill is dramatic, and the author might have done a better job of representing these viewpoints throughout the book.

The book's conclusion—that "an 'ecosystem-based approach'" and more regional planning with an emphasis on communities and the environment have come to pervade the valley—is a lovely sentiment but not one that emerges from the evidence presented or the reality of the Hudson River Valley, especially its northern and upcountry stretches. The book's basic flaw is that Benjamin presents a prodigious amount of research yet does relatively little to place the material in the broader context of historiographical trends and larger societal developments. Is the region distinctive or representative of the Northeast or the United States as a whole? Does what happened here matter in California or Oklahoma? Thematically, the book's overarching argument lacks clarity. The concept of *keekuten*, Dutch for peepholes that served as windows of opportunity in the valley, appears quite frequently (p. 4, *passim*). It might serve as an interesting theoretical framework but is not fully developed.

Benjamin also makes several interpretive lapses or perhaps omissions. For instance, on p. 390 he writes: "*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) was a defining moment in the Eisenhower decade, precipitating the rapid integration of schools and changes in educational thinking." This gross oversimplification ignores shelves of academic research demonstrating that *Brown* was largely symbolic and required decades of vigorous and persistent federal engagement, even the use of force, to become reality. School integration is far from complete in 2017. The author admits in his Preface that he relies on "a vast body of secondary literature" (xi) but could do a better job of integrating that material into his argument.

Stylistically, this book is a pleasant read. In several sections Benjamin employs an imaginative and gifted writing style that moves the narrative along. He effectively dramatizes the scenes and has an eye for the telling detail. Too many of those details appear, perhaps, and at times the book reads as if every tidbit of research has been included. Some of the transitions are incredibly rough and strain the reader's ability to connect the topic of one paragraph to another:

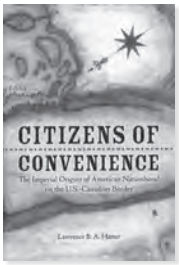
Novelist Floyd Dell saw the changed sexual proclivities of the youth as emblematic of man's evolution as a species.

The growth of tourism that accompanied and interest in the Valley and the Catskills was a direct result of improvements in transportation. (238)

Yet even with these critiques, I found the book to be worthwhile reading and an important contribution to our understanding of the Hudson River Valley. The sheer volume of information, compiled in one place, makes this book an essential addition to any library—personal or institutional—that values the history of the Hudson River Valley.

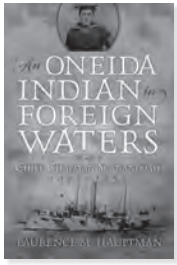
Thomas A. Chambers, Niagara University

New & Noteworthy Books



Citizens of Convenience: The Imperial Origins of American Nationhood on the U.S.-Canadian Border
By Lawrence B.A. Hatter (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2016) 288 pp. $39.50 (hardcover) www.upress.virginia.edu

For the United States, the forty-year period immediately following the conclusion of the American Revolution was one of establishing identity and codifying operations. Nowhere was this truer or more necessary than along the northern border of the new nation, particularly among the Canadian merchants and traders, imperial agents, and policymakers who occupied this area. Using the Treaty of Paris (1783), Jay Treaty (1794), and Treaty of Ghent (1814) as key components of transition, Hatter skillfully articulates the process of formalizing the United States as a separate nation from its former colonizer, Great Britain.



The Oneida Indian in Foreign Waters: The Life of Chief Chapman Scanandoah, 1870-1953
By Laurence M. Hauptman (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2016) 232 pp. $24.95 (softcover) www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu

The accomplishments of Chief Chapman Scanandoah demonstrate the ability of one person to make significant and long-lasting contributions through determination and perseverance. Formally educated and a decorated Navy veteran, Scanandoah influenced the fields of agronomy and mechanics, among others, while also making a number of inventions. Hauptman chronicles Scanandoah's key role as an advocate for the preservation of Oneida lands, even as he traveled to and lived in many other places. Complete with photos and a formidable bibliography, this narrative highlights the life of an extraordinary individual.

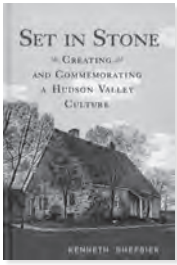
The Pinkster King and the King of Kongo: The Forgotten History of America's Dutch-Owned Slaves
By Jeroen Dewulf (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2017) 320 pp. $65.00 (hardcover) www.upress.state.ms.us

The celebration of Pinkster, most often associated with African-American culture in New Amsterdam and later in New York and New Jersey, comes from complicated and often misinterpreted origins. The Pinkster King and the King of Kongo sets out to establish

clarity and certainty about this cultural celebration. Dewulf frames Pinkster from the perspectives of both Dutch and African-American traditions, and creates continuity between the slave culture in New York/New Jersey and elsewhere in the Americas. By doing so, he also achieves a new understanding of the influence of European cultures on enslaved Africans who arrived in North America.

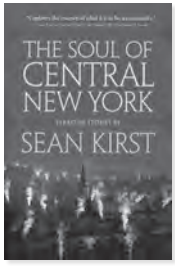
The Quarry Fox and Other Critters of the Wild Catskills
By Leslie T. Sharpe (New York, NY: The Overlook Press, 2017)
256 pp. $25.00 (hardcover) www.overlookpress.com

The Catskill Mountains serve as a home for a wide variety of animals that occupy the land, water, and sky. In *The Quarry Fox*, Leslie T. Sharpe does more than just identify these inhabitants; she immerses the reader in their environs. Displaying a vast knowledge of the subject and a deep appreciation for the land and her naturalist predecessors, Sharpe brings life to both the seen and often unseen critters that make up the Catskills, while also conveying the beauty and serenity of the region.



Set in Stone: Creating and Commemorating a Hudson Valley Culture
By Kenneth Shefsiek (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2017)
314 pp. $90.00 (hardcover) www.sunypress.edu

Set in Stone is the story of the original New Paltz settlement, which grappled with emigration, immigration, and the establishing of cultural identity in a complex colonial landscape. As English culture supplanted Dutch, these Walloon settlers struggled to maintain their unique blend of traditions. Shefsiek demonstrates clear command of this detailed history and presents it in a comprehensive and engaging format.



The Soul of Central New York: Syracuse Stories
By Sean Kirst (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2016)
352 pp. $29.95 (softcover) www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu

In many ways, the residents of Syracuse exemplify what it means to be a part of "everyday America." In this collection of twenty-five years' worth of columns written for The Syracuse Post-Standard, Kirst recounts the extraordinary events and accomplishments that make the city and its residents remarkable. Divided into sections by characteristics such as "courage" and "loyalty," the essays cover everything from reunited friends and military legacies to community relations—and really does display the soul of this central New York city.

Andrew Villani, Marist College