NEW YORK HISTORY

SUMMER 2022

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Submitted articles should address, in an original fashion, some aspect of New York State history. Articles that deal with the history of other areas or with general American history must have a direct bearing on New York State history. It is assumed that the article will have some new, previously unexploited material to offer or will present new insights or new interpretations. Editorial communications, including article submissions, should be sent to the Editorial Board via email (NYHJ@nysed.gov) Suggested length is 20-30 double spaced pages (or between 6,000 and 9,000 words), including footnotes. All submitted articles must include a 100-word abstract summarizing the article and providing keywords (no more than 10). Authors must submit articles electronically, with all text in Word and all tables, figures, and images in formats supported by Microsoft Windows. Provision of images in proper resolution (no less than 300 dpi at 5″ x 7″), securing requisite permissions, and the payment of any fees associated with images for articles are all the responsibility of the author. *New York History* employs, with some modification, footnote forms suggested in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. More detailed submissions guidelines are to be found on the research and collections page of the New York State Museum: http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/research-collections/state-history/resources/new-york-history-journal

Cover art: *Front and back:* Details from Julio De Diego's *Nichos No. 2,* 1947. Tempera on paper. Courtesy of the New York State Museum, Historic Woodstock Art Colony, Arthur A. Anderson Collection. Born in Madrid, Spain, Julio De Diego (1900–1979) made an impact on New York State as a member of the Woodstock Art Colony, where he moved permanently in 1961.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Robert Chiles, Devin R. Lander, Jennifer Lemak, and Aaron Noble

As this issue was being prepared for publication, ten African American shoppers were murdered in a mass shooting by a white supremacist at a grocery in western New York State. We grieve with the community that was attacked in Buffalo and stand in unwavering solidarity with all of those who have been victims of racist violence.

In remembrance of those murdered in Buffalo:

Roberta A. Drury, Buffalo
Margus D. Morrison, Buffalo
Andre Mackneil, Auburn
Aaron Salter, Lockport
Geraldine Talley, Buffalo
Celestine Chaney, Buffalo
Heyward Patterson, Buffalo
Pearl Young, Buffalo
Ruth Whitfield, Buffalo

~

As we open volume 103 of *New York History*, we are pleased to welcome two new members to our advisory board: Dr. Marsha E. Barrett of the University of Illinois, and Dr. Jennifer Burns of the University at Albany. We are excited to be joined by these two brilliant historians of the Empire State, and we are grateful for the important contributions of our entire board.

New York's rich history is overflowing with widely celebrated, broadly studied episodes—memorable events echoing across the centuries and fascinating historic locales woven intimately into the state's diverse geographic tapestry. While these well-known sites and stories draw young and old to a renewed fascination with the Empire State's place in history, the wide-ranging essays in this issue of *New York History* remind us how much is gained by reconsidering even famous moments and spaces from new perspectives and in light of new evidence—from colonial New York straight into the twentieth century.

In "'A Frontier Place': The Transformation of Colonial Albany, 1756–1763," Elizabeth George transcends the much-studied role of New York in the military action of the Seven Years' War to reveal the conflict's social influence, demonstrating the complex ways that "the war forced Albany residents to become less isolated and frontier-focused by putting considerations of their relationship to British imperial power at the forefront of their minds." Farther south along the Hudson, the authors contributing to the section titled "Decentering Early New York City's History" challenge us to move beyond chronicles of "the successive triumph of British and American political regimes and their concomitant socio-economic elite," a narrative that Benjamin L. Carp argues "neglects the city's full complexity and diversity." Instead, these pieces "recover untold stories, remedy the omissions that have distorted the history of New York, and help connect New York's history with broader interpretive

frameworks." In "Jewish New York Inside and Out: Violence, Ethnicity, and Embeddedness in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan," John M. Dixon reimagines colonial New York as an urban space that was "ethnically contested rather than British American by default," opening space for readers to "fully recover how Jews interacted with the city, asserted their belonging, and sustained a group identity outside of specific Jewish arenas such as the synagogue and private Jewish homes." In "Remapping the History of Dutch New Yorkers," Joyce D. Goodfriend asserts that "the descendants of the New Amsterdam Dutch merit sustained attention because, despite the dilution of their political power, they left an indelible imprint on early New York City." And in "No Shelter from the Storm: Slavery and Freedom in Early New York City," David N. Gellman asserts that Black history in early New York "challenges long-standing narratives of the city's pluralist ethos."

The creation of the Erie Canal is a universally acknowledged turning point in the history of the state and the nation. Yet as Steven Carl Smith shows in "Politics in the Margins: Elkanah Watson, DeWitt Clinton, and the History of the Erie Canal in the Early American Republic," the history and meaning of the canal was contested even as it was coming into existence. Similarly, interrogating alternative perspectives on society and politics enriches our understanding of public life in New York in the years surrounding the Civil War. In "'Salutary and Well-Intentioned Violence': The 1858 Quarantine Fires in Staten Island," Andy McCarthy reveals a history of "mass paranoia, misinformation, and threats of destruction" surrounding the Staten Island Quarantine Hospital that erupted in the "Quarantine War" of 1858—noting that these events "were consistent with a polarizing and politicized derangement that characterized the American mass mind in the late 1850s." Around the same time, northward across New York Bay, Irish émigré and bohemian writer Fitz-James O'Brien seemed largely to be avoiding the major controversies of his moment; yet, as John P. Irish demonstrates in "'Fitz-James O'Brien Hands in His Chips': His New York Writings on Slavery and the Civil War," O'Brien's output from these years reveals a "realization and actualization that he was a part of something larger and more important than his individual life." The writer felt a "connection to the universe and the universe's connection to him" that called him to fight, and to die, for the Union. In the twentieth century, the Communist "Young Pioneers of America" were of course less ideologically ambiguous than O'Brien's bohemian comrades, but even here, individual stories add a layer of

complexity to our historical understanding of major events. As Jack Hodgson shows in "From the Bronx to Stalingrad: Harry Eisman and the Young Pioneers of America in New York City," the fight to secure the sixteen-year-old Communist's 1930 release from Hawthorne Reformatory School informed broader ideological and international discourse as Eisman "became a poster-boy victim of oppression by American capitalists and securing his release took on a wider symbolic importance for his supporters and his [soon]-to-be Soviet hosts."

All these articles provide important new angles on well-known moments in New York history. Our three features similarly call on scholars to reassess the history around us—even that of famous people and places. Jack Bradbury and Sandra Vehrencamp in their piece for Community NY, make the case for scholars to craft "Historical Field Guides" across New York. In a second Community NY feature, Martin Joyce provides a unique perspective on a well-known place, narrating the remarkable stories of Blanche and Mary Berard, two generations of West Point women who operated within the nineteenth-century patronage system to entrench their influence in the federal civil service and set a precedent that led to nearly a century of women serving as postmasters for the U.S. Military Academy community. And, in Part II of their Teach NY feature on teaching Robert Moses in the twenty-first century, Katie Uva and Kara Murphy Schlichting present an accessible, document-centered curriculum to allow modern students to explore Moses's much-debated career and legacies with greater nuance and appropriate context.

A state bursting with such a diverse and rich history is perpetually primed for a proliferation of critical perspectives and creative pedagogies. Whether shining new light on old interpretations or revealing exciting archival discoveries, *New York History* enthusiastically welcomes this continuing exploration of the Empire State's past.

Excelsior!
The Editors

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Benjamin L. Carp is Daniel M. Lyons Professor of American History at Brooklyn College and is affiliated with the Graduate Center, City University of New York. His next book, *The Great New York Fire of 1776: A Lost Story of the American Revolution*, will be published by Yale University Press in 2023.

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John P. Irish teaches AP U.S. History, AP Language and Composition, American Studies, and Special Topics in Humanities at Carroll Senior High School in Southlake, Texas. He is a nationally certified consultant in AP U.S. History for the College Board and has served as a Question Leader, Table Leader, and Reader for the AP U.S. History Exam. He was a member of the College Board AP U.S. History Test Development Committee, serving as the co-chair as well as the College Board advisor, for ten years and has published three books in the series Historical Thinking Skills for the redesigned AP History courses, published by W.W. Norton. He has won multiple teaching awards, including the Gilder Lehrman U.S. History Teacher of the Year for Texas and the Humanities Texas Teacher of the Year. He holds a D.L.S. in Humanities from Southern Methodist University. The focus of his dissertation research was on early nineteenth-century American social thought, with special emphasis on the writings of a little-known Irish-American writer of fiction: Fitz-James O'Brien—the Irish Poe.

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JACK BRADBURY AND SANDRA VEHRENCAMP

Jack Bradbury received his PhD in animal behavior from Rockefeller University in 1968. Sandra Vehrencamp received her PhD in behavioral ecology from Cornell University in 1976. Both then served as full-time faculty at the University of California, San Diego, where they taught courses in behavioral ecology and animal communication for twenty-four years. They concurrently undertook field research on the behavior of birds, bats, sea slugs, and antelope in both the Central American and African tropics. They both moved to faculty positions at Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology in 1999 and taught courses in Cornell's Department of Neurobiology and Behavior. In addition to numerous publications in scientific journals, they are the coauthors of two editions of a textbook on animal communication. Jack retired in 2009, and Sandra retired the following year. They continue to reside in Ithaca, New York, where they stay busy with local projects, gardening, hiking, traveling, and visiting family.

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