

## INTRODUCTION

From its source at Lake Tear of the Clouds to the Atlantic Ocean, the length of the Hudson River is three hundred miles. Its northern half is a wild, tumultuous stream. Its southern half is calm and expansive and the River falls only six feet through the hundred and fifty miles from Troy and Albany to the sea. The Mohawk River is a westward extension of the great Hudson River. This hundred mile long River, like the southern half of the Hudson, is navigable. The Hudson River and its Mohawk tributary to the west have served since the earliest days of settlement as inland waterways to the interior of the state and northward and westward.

It was this River which the English sea captain, Henry Hudson, discovered and explored in 1609 for the Dutch East India Company while trying to find the northwest passage to India. Other explorers, traders and settlers followed.

It was in the Hudson River basin that most of the settlements of the Dutch in North America in the 17th century were made and here their influence in architecture, place names, legends, manners and customs has persisted. In the Hudson Valley a strong landed aristocracy developed in the northern colonies, its tradition fading out very slowly and leaving many impressive historic sites and buildings behind. The Voorlezer's House, the Old Dutch Church of Sleepy Hollow, Philipsburg Manor, the Hurley settlement, and the Pieter Bronck House illustrate the rich heritage left by Dutch Exploration and Settlement.

The fur trade was a strong economic factor, - a new and important industry in that era. It was also an important political factor. Fur traders penetrated deeply north along the Hudson River and west along the Mohawk River. They brought back glowing reports of the land ahead, and helped to induce the great surge of settlement through the river valleys. The English and Dutch fur traders and the settlers who followed them soon found themselves in conflict with the French who came down from the north; and with the Indians whose lands were being settled and who were pushed farther and farther to the west and north. The seeds of the French and Indian War were being sown. England refused to acknowledge the claim of France to the territory in the interior. Sir William Johnson was appointed as Indian Agent to coordinate and improve Indian policies, and he left his mark on various historic sites and buildings described in the pages of this report. The French and Indian War broke out early in 1754, and raged through the central New York area for six years until the surrender of Montreal in 1760 and France gave up its claim to Canada and its dependencies in North America by the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

Development of the New York colonies proceeded slowly because of Indian hostility, incited by French agents. After the French and Indian War, however, settlement accelerated and the Hudson and Mohawk River valleys became great channels for river transportation - furs and farm products down the river and supplies up the river. The valleys of the Hudson and the Mohawk Rivers together constituted nearly the whole area of settlement in New York until after the American Revolution. Sites illustrating the history of New York State and its role in the national drama are most thickly clustered within these valleys. It is here that the work of preservation has retained significant historic sites of the era such as Philipse Manor, Van Cortlandt Manor, the Street of the Huguenots, Schenectady Stockade and Fort Crailo.

The War for American Independence again emphasized the great significance of the Hudson River Valley. The strategic importance of the Hudson River was recognized early in the conflict between the American colonies and Great Britain. Every road connecting New England with the other colonies crossed the Hudson River at some point. The Hudson River was also important as a means of transportation from the St. Lawrence through Lake Champlain and southward to the Atlantic Ocean at New York City. The colonists realized the necessity of keeping control of the river and preventing the separation of the colonies by the British.

The British campaign strategy in 1777 was to take the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys - St. Leger moving east on Albany along the Mohawk; Burgoyne moving south on Albany along the upper Hudson; and Howe moving north on Albany through the lower Hudson Valley. The first two of these three campaigns ended in failure for the British - the lower Hudson campaign ended in defeat against overwhelming odds for the Americans but the Colonists regained control of the River, where, significantly, Washington was standing guard when peace was signed in 1783. Many of the most significant of the historic sites and buildings in the Hudson Valley are monuments of that campaign - Fort Stanwix, Oriskany, Saratoga, Fort Montgomery, Fort Clinton, Fort Lee - to name but a few.

Travel and Communication were important in the Hudson River Valley both before and after the Revolutionary War. The Hudson River was the testing ground for the triumphant voyage of the "Clermont" - the first steamboat, invented and developed by Robert Fulton. It has special significance in the Hudson Valley because it was named "Clermont" after the estate of Robert Fulton's friend, Chancellor Livingston.

As has been noted above, fur traders and settlers used the rivers for transportation; and opposing armies fought for control of the river. After the war, land hungry settlers moved westward along the river in great numbers. Early in the 19th century, sections of the Inland Canal at Fort Hunter and Little Falls were built around falls and shoals. Plans were made for a Great Canal in the Mohawk Valley and across the State which was completed in 1825, uniting the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean. The Erie Canal was to affect profoundly the tide of settlement toward western New York and Ohio. One speaker at the opening of the canal said, "They have built the longest canal in the world, in the least time, with the least experience, for the least money, and to the greatest public benefit." The Erie Canal parks proposed for Fort Hunter and Moss Island at Little Falls will preserve for posterity the heritage of this great era in the history of the State.

The steamboat and the canals were but the beginning of improved transportation. Turnpikes were built along each side of the river and into the interior. And railroads followed soon after turnpikes and canals. Thus, the river valley has served increasingly as a great transportation corridor into and through New York.

The spread of transportation facilities promoted travel and exchange of ideas. Postal service improved and newspapers proliferated the cities and towns of the state. Better educational facilities followed.

The arts and sciences developed rapidly after the Revolutionary War and, with improved travel and communication facilities, the affluence of the society is reflected in many fine estates along the Hudson River, such as Lyndhurst, Sunnyside, Boscobel, Locust Grove, Vanderbilt Mansion, Clermont, Olana and the Cluett House. The State was also a political arena and many colorful political battles were centered in the Hudson Valley. These are represented in this report by the Martin Van Buren Home at Kinderhook, the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace, Hamilton Grange National Memorial, and the John Jay Homestead and the State Capitol.

Time and space have not permitted some other colorful episodes to be included. Two such episodes relate to land reform and the agricultural revolt. The earliest of these revolts occurred shortly before the Revolutionary War at Quaker Hill where William Prendergast became the leader of a movement protesting payment of rents to absentee landlords. Prendergast was found guilty of high treason against His Majesty and sentenced to be hanged. His wife, Mehitabel, rode to Manhattan and persuaded the British Governor to seek a pardon, and finally, a royal pardon arrived. Prendergast was released and returned to Philipse Manor, but later migrated with his large family to Tennessee, then back to Chautauqua Lake where he died almost half a century after the uprising which he had led.

Another agricultural revolt occurred in the mid-19th century in Columbia County. The tenant farmers found that they must pay rent in cash, crops and service to landlords who held perpetual leases inherited from their ancestors. Dr. Smith Boughton organized a farmers alliance to protest such tyranny. In order to conceal their identity the men wore calico dresses and hung bright tin horns from their belts. As weapons they carried spears, pitch forks or guns. Dr. Boughton and his leaders were arrested and placed in the Hudson jail. Officials feared trouble from the Calico Indians and sent for assistance to nearby communities, to Albany and even to New York City. The small village of Hudson became an armed camp. Popular reaction set in, however, to the great military display and gradually the people of Hudson disposed of the outside troops. The trial of Dr. Boughton lasted during the summer.

Boughton was found guilty and the tenant farmers realized once more that they had lost in the struggle for land reform. When John Youngs became Governor at the next election, he obtained the pardon of Boughton and secured the adoption of the State Constitution of 1846 which abolished feudalism in the Hudson Valley.

Other significant movements in the arts and sciences took place. One of the more interesting of these was the fad for octagon houses which swept up the Hudson and westward through the Mohawk Valley. The father of the octagon house was Orson Fowler who wrote and published a book in 1849 entitled "A Home For All". This architectural type-specimen has distinguishing characteristics which should be carefully identified and evaluated but which are not included in this report on 100 selected historic sites and structures.

Among the arts and sciences one movement in the Hudson Valley stands out. This is the growth of the Hudson River School of artists which is illustrated in this report by the Thomas Cole House and the Frederick E. Church Estate, "Olana".

The development and conservation of natural resources in the Hudson River Valley are here illustrated by the great Central Park. It was created in New York City a century ago and was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and his partner Calvert Vaux. The Palisades Interstate Park is also a monument to a popular movement for the preservation of a great scenic resource and the creation of a park overlapping State lines. Although the work of Andrew Jackson Downing has great historic value, this landscape artist has not been included in this report.

Historic sites have come to be recognized as major elements in National, State and local recreational programs. They are irreplaceable sources of knowledge of the past. When properly presented to the public they have important inspirational value. By illustrating the life and problems of earlier generations of Americans, they help to place our present institutions, our achievements, and our problems in perspective and thus foster patriotism. They are, when well interpreted, endlessly fascinating to the traveler, and they account for an important part of total tourist travel. Properly developed historic sites are economic assets to the communities in which they are located.

It is fitting, therefore, that the Legislature of the State of New York has created the Hudson River Valley scenic and historic corridor. In its statement of purpose, the Legislature points out that "the Hudson River - along a course from the wilderness of the forest preserve in the Adirondack Park, through a series of wild rapids, then broadening and deepening to flow past the State Capitol, beside the foothills of the Catskill, through the Hudson highlands and the Palisades and by the City of New York to meet the Atlantic Ocean at the Verrazano - Narrows Bridge - links the greatest variety of scenic, historic, and cultural resources to be found perhaps anywhere in the country."

The Hudson River Valley Commission was "authorized and directed to make a detailed land use analysis, including a survey of the scenic, historic and cultural resources of the Hudson River Valley scenic and historic corridor area, and to make recommendations to the governor and the legislature . . . ." This study of some one hundred historic sites and buildings is a part of the program which was authorized and directed.