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The Holland Society of New York was organized in 1885 to collect and preserve information respecting the history and settlement of New Netherland by the Dutch, to perpetuate the memory, foster and promote the principles and virtues of the Dutch ancestors of its members, to maintain a library relating to the Dutch in America, and to prepare papers, essays, books, etc., in regard to the history and genealogy of the Dutch in America. The Society is principally organized of descendants in the direct male line of residents of the Dutch colonies in the present-day United States prior to or during the year 1675. Inquiries respecting the several criteria for membership are invited.

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WE THINK of seventeenth-century America as a land of plenty. Yet, Labadist missionary Basper Danckaerts discovered destitution hidden among New Netherland's virginal thickets as he traveled in 1679-1680 about the former Dutch territory. "It made my heart sore indeed," he wrote, "for I had never in all my life seen such poverty, and that, too, in the middle of a woods and a wilderness." Recent community studies confirm that a substantial minority of the population lived in dire circumstances. Janny Venema's study of the poor in mid-seventeenth-century Beverwijck (present-day Albany), for example, estimates that the indigent comprised about twenty percent of that town's population. Jaap Jacobs notes in his comprehensive New Netherland history, "Little is known about the lowest order in the colony, the tramps and beggars, even though the people that appealed for charity made up a considerable proportion of the population."

This issue of de Halve Maen presents essays on how two small colonial New York communities dealt with their less fortunate. Eric Roth explores the face of poverty in the mid-Hudson Valley village of New Paltz between 1678 and 1828, while the late Eric Nooter looks at poor relief in the Long Island community of Flatbush between 1654 and the American Revolution. "In early modern societies, as today," Roth notes, "people in need often relied upon public assistance to get through hard times; unlike today, such assistance was both funded and administered by local institutions."

If relief efforts at New York City, Kingston, and Albany showed cooperation between church and state during the colonial period, Roth and Nooter reveal that in rural villages, such as New Paltz and Flatbush, the Reformed church was the only institution to organize welfare services. Decisions about who received assistance were made by the church councils, while actual care for the poor fell to the church deacons. Aid recipients in both communities included widows, illegitimate children, orphans, transients, those suffering from injury, illness, and mental instability, and the landed poor. Roth adds, however, that blacks comprised another significant group receiving public relief as slavery declined in the early nineteenth century. The topic was not broached by Nooter, perhaps because slavery remained an institution in pre-Revolutionary Flatbush with care the responsibility of the owner. While many paupers were temporary rather than long-term inhabitants, transients were viewed with suspicion. "Town leaders were often reluctant to grant relief to transients," Roth writes, "requiring proof of residence."

In both communities, local inhabitants comprised the primary beneficiaries of aid, although recipients also included people from neighboring villages and regions as well as people of nationalities other than the Dutch majority in Flatbush and the Huguenot majority in New Paltz. Relief included the providing of clothing and food, services, and cash. Another method involved contracting out room and board for those without a home and/or those who could not care for themselves. Deacons also frequently absorbed funeral costs and doctors' fees and provided low-interest loans. By providing such loans, Nooter notes, the "Flatbush deaconry functioned, in fact, as a local bank."

The nature of social welfare in these two rural communities suggests that the major emphasis was not in providing a safety net for inhabitants but rather as a means of encouraging the needy to help themselves and, as Nooter writes, have the "chance to remain independent." An interesting example which Nooter reports is the use of poor funds to release men from jail, presumably to return breadwinners home to their families. As a result, few aid recipients in either community became permanent wards.

Pre-Revolutionary New Paltz and Flatbush were small agricultural communities. Yet, Roth's study reveals that significant population growth, ethnic and economic diversification, the widening gap between rich and poor, with a concentration of wealth among the town's founding families contributed to change the face of poor relief by the nineteenth century. "In response to the needs of a growing destitute population," he notes, "relief responsibility shifted from the church to the town government."

No longer was poor relief a community effort within a kinship network but increasingly an impersonal affair that "institutionalized poverty."

The "standard approach to local history has favored studies of the founding settlers and successful families, at the expense of the less fortunate, whose memory has thus been obscured," Roth writes. Our increasing knowledge of how the Dutch and Huguenot communities of New Netherland dealt with their poor, however, is providing new insights into the assimilative qualities of these communities. As Eric Nooter observes, "Both the social welfare projects organized by the church for those in need and its function as a bank for the better-off further help explain why the church could play a central role in the Flatbush community's identification with Dutch culture for such a long time." And, perhaps, also teach us a more compassionate yet productive method for dealing with the poor of our own age.

David William Voorhees
Editor
Being Poor in New Paltz, New York
1678-1828

by Eric J. Roth

In early modern societies, as today, people in need often relied upon public assistance to get through hard times; unlike today, such assistance was both funded and administered by local institutions. Applicants to public poor relief programs included a wide variety of people: the sick, injured, widowed, orphaned, homeless, mentally unstable, and the landed poor. Regrettably, the standard approach to local history has favored studies of the founding settlers and successful families at the expense of the less fortunate, whose memory has thus been obscured. This essay focuses primarily on the indigent population of New Paltz in Ulster County, New York, from the town’s first settlement in 1678 to the establishment of the county poorhouse in 1828. It is hoped that their inclusion in the historical literature will help to provide a fuller and deeper understanding of the community during its first 150 years of existence.

By the time the town’s founding families began building the now famous Huguenot Street stone houses, they had already seen much of poverty and need. Some of the older members of the group had lived through the devastation of the Thirty Years’ War, while others survived the plague that ravaged their temporary refuge in Mannheim in 1666.1 In the New World, some of their number were residing in Kingston and Hurley (Wildwijck and Nieuwe Dorp) when those settlements were devastated by the natives in the Esopus Massacre of 1663. Others came a bit later but were, nevertheless, witness to the poverty and misery prevalent during the aftermath of that event.

When providing relief to the poor in New Paltz, the town’s founders were able to draw from a tradition of Protestant relief efforts in Europe dating back to the mid-sixteenth century.2 As in other Huguenot communities, it was the local church that took responsibility for material assistance. This relationship strengthened bonds among church members and fulfilled the Calvinist ideals of Christian love and good works.3 While decisions about who received assistance were made by the church councils, the day-to-day responsibility of caring for the poor fell to lay officers, the church deacons. As the financial managers of the congregation, deacons kept accounts of monies received and expended for poor relief as well as such activities as maintaining the building, purchasing communion wine, and paying the salaries of the ministers and other salaried church officers.4

New Paltz Town Map, surveyed by Louis Bevier, 1762. New Paltz Town Records (1677-1932), MSS Collection, Huguenot Historical Society (HHS), New Paltz, N.Y.

Two surviving deacons’ accounts from New Paltz provide an important if fragmented picture of poor relief in the early settlement. The first account spans the period from 1698 to 1710 and appears to have been kept by two of the town’s founders, Jean Hasbrouck and Louis Bevier.5 The second account dates from 1731 to 1736 and was found, only recently, within a child’s ciphering book of the era.6 Use of these accounts is problematic, due to significant gaps in the entries: the lack of any deacons’ records from 1711 to 1730 is puzzling, although this deficiency

1 Johannes Maresch, "Inden alten Lligotettenstadt Mannheim: Geschichte der Wallonisch- und Französisch Reformierten Gemeinde in Mannheim bis 1689" (Magdeburg: Wallonisch-Reformierten Gemeinde, 1939), 19.
6 Ciphering Book, Abraham Hasbrouck (ca. 1730-1849). Ciphering Book Collection (ca. 1730-1849), MSS Collection, HHS.
might be due to lost accounts rather than careless recordkeeping. It is also possible that the church was temporarily inactive at this time, as there are no surviving records for baptisms or marriages during these same years. Furthermore, documentation is absent for 1699, 1702, 1705-1706, and 1737, and the accounts for several other years are almost as sparse.

The majority of the extant accounts concern money received during Sunday worship services or expended for poor relief and ceremonial needs. For example, on May 19, 1700, the deacons received eleven francs and nine sous “for the poor and for the offering” and paid two francs for the Eucharist wine. The next week, they received a “bushel of wheat for the poor.”

Specific donators to the poor fund are occasionally mentioned: Mary Hasbrouck gave 38 1/2 francs for the poor on April 12, 1703, they gave a poor man named Jean DePre.

Two other testators who left bequests to the poor were Catherine Blanshan (widow of New Paltz patentee Louis de Halve Maen).
DuBois) and her second husband, Jean Cottin, both of whom willed money to the Dutch Reformed Church in Kingston, though Blanshan had no lack of heirs. Cottin also specified that the interest from one of his debts "be distributed among the poor of the French Church [at New Paltz]."17 In addition to providing for the poor, Catherine Blanshan left detailed instructions to her executors to free her two enslaved African women, Dina and Rachel, and to provide for their care. Catherine's generosity is remarkable and went against her own family's wishes: her children contested the will in the hope of dividing the entirety of their mother's estate among themselves.18 While we can never determine exactly why the couple was so charitable, there are factors that may provide some hint of their motivation. In the case of Catherine, it is likely that her experience as a prisoner of the Esopus tribe in the wake of their raid on Kingston and Hurley in 1663 imbued her with a heightened sense of sympathy for the less fortunate. She was one of more than a score of women and children who spent fully three months with the natives before being rescued by Dutch forces.19 Records show that these captives were well-treated and were, to some degree, incorporated into village life. Some of the captive children were even reported to have been "talking Indian" by the time they were returned to the Dutch settlement.20 Could such an experience have humbled Catherine and given her a unique cultural perspective? Cottin, like Tebanin and Chevalier, cited above, had no children of his own. But he may have been influenced as well by his wife's generosity. Finally, it is possible, although highly speculative, that their Huguenot background led them to share a greater concern for the poor, since studies of other refugee communities have shown high levels of charitable bequests by Calvinist testators.21

Determining the population of indigent persons in New Paltz is not easy. Judging from the deacons' accounts, it would appear that several persons were receiving support in New Paltz, yet only Depré and Sommon, mentioned above, are named in the records. In her book on mid-seventeenth-century Beverwijck (present-day Albany), Venema estimates that the poor comprised about twenty percent of the town's population, although data for the years between 1653 and 1664 fluctuates significantly: there were only two paupers recorded in 1653, while there were at least twenty-six in 1660.22 Comparing the populations of Beverwijck during the mid-seventeenth century and New Paltz during the early eighteenth is problematic at best. Given the lack of similar studies for other locations, it is, perhaps, better than nothing. For example, Beverwijck had forty households in 1648 while New Paltz had thirty-three in 1728. Using the demographic profile described by historian Paula Carlo in conjunction with extant census records and tax lists, we can project the town's approximate population at various points in the eighteenth century.23 In 1703, the population of New Paltz was about 130, with the projected number of households standing at seventeen.24 If we use Venema's estimate, there could have been as many as twenty-six paupers in New Paltz in 1703 and as many as forty-five in 1728 (see Table 1). However, these numbers seem far too high when measured against the town poor relief and tax records and, for a variety of historical reasons described below, New Paltz may have been a more uniformly prosperous community than Beverwijck. A more likely comparison is with the French Church in New York during the 1690s, which usually supported between four and seven paupers in any given year.25

During the town's first seventy years, wealth distribution was generally equitable, and those in need tended to be members of the founding families or, at least, other

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“Collectors of the New York Historical Society” 1923, 52.


Venema, 327-328.


Huguenots. The 1728 tax list, for instance, shows (with one noted exception) a remarkably flat distribution of taxable property compared with later assessments. Between 1728 and 1765, however, the number of households in New Paltz increased dramatically from thirty-three to 112. The population continued to grow over the next fifty years, and by 1820 there were almost six hundred households in the town. This population explosion brought about three significant changes: greater ethnic diversity, a widening in the income gap between rich and poor, and an increase in the percentage of indigents.

In 1712, seventeen of the twenty-two households (seventy-seven percent) were headed by someone with a French surname. The remaining five had Dutch names and were all assessed in the bottom fourth quartile of the town's wealth distribution. The 1728 tax list shows only slight changes in the ethnic makeup of the town. Twenty-three of the thirty-two households (seventy-two percent) were headed by individuals with French surnames; eight were Dutch (twenty-five percent), and the remaining one English (three percent). In 1728, of the top half of the population, all but one possessed Huguenot names, while only five Huguenots can be found in the lower half, although most of these seem to be composed of younger family members.

The differences between the 1728 and the 1765 tax lists, however, are striking. Of the 112 households identified in 1765, less than half (forty-six percent) are headed by individuals with the old French surnames, and only seventeen percent are Dutch (although it must be noted that by this time most of the French and Dutch families had already intermarried). The remaining thirty-seven percent appear to be mostly families of English, Scottish, Irish, or German extraction. Despite the spike and the diversity of the town's population, however, a significant portion of the wealth was still retained by the older French and Dutch families: thirty-seven of the forty wealthiest household are either French or Dutch, while only about twelve French or Dutch households were among the poorest forty. Another remarkable feature of the 1765 list is the very high percentage of households assessed at the low end of the spectrum. Fully forty households out of 112 were assessed at less than two pounds, and fifty-eight were assessed at less than five. In both 1712 and 1728, only six of the twenty-two and thirty-two households for these respective years had been assessed at less than five pounds.

Each of these trends—significant population growth, ethnic diversification, the widening gap between rich and poor, and concentration of wealth among the town's founding families—intensified throughout the remainder of the century. In 1798, there were 374 households in the town, more than triple the number in 1765. The top quartile owned over seventy-five percent of the town's entire wealth, and just under half of the wealthiest households (forty-five percent) had surnames of the town's patricians.

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>17 (projected)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712/13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>149.6 (projected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>217 (projected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1728</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>225 (projected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>761 (projected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>2,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>2,543 (projected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>3,148 (projected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>4,066 (projected)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1798 tax list, in contrast with earlier assessments, is its inclusion of non-homeowners. This information allows us to better differentiate between landowning poor and tenants. Of 182 individuals listed on Schedule B (the less prosperous list), ninety-eight did not own their own homes. They rented from a combination of fifty-three landowners, just over half of whom were members of the town's founding families. Of the sixty-five poorest landowners, only twenty-nine of the one-hundred and eighty-two tenants rented only land and are thus not considered as members of the poor home-owning population described in this study.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Wealth Distribution by Quartile, 1712/3-1765</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quartile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Quartile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Quartile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Quartile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest Quartile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1798 assessment also provides detailed descriptions of houses, acreage, and outbuildings, allowing us a glimpse into the living conditions of some of the town's poorest families. It is clear, although not surprising, that the poorer the family, the greater likelihood that they would live in smaller houses situated on less acreage. With few exceptions, the dwellings of poorest individuals were made of logs rather than wood frame, stone, or brick (see Table 3). Seventy percent of properties assessed at less than $200 had log houses, while the rest were wood frame dwellings. The poorest homeowner in the town was John Lister, who was assessed at seven dollars. In the 1800 census, Lister is described as older than forty-five, heading a household consisting of one white female over forty-five, presumably his wife, and one white male under ten. The three of them resided in a fourteen-by-sixteen-foot house built of logs, situated on a mere eighty perches of land. The house was assessed at five dollars and the property contained no additional outbuildings. Another poor household belonged to a family of five headed by John Lane, who was assessed at ten dollars. His house, situated on four acres of land, measured sixteen-by-sixteen and was also built of logs.

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twenty-three (thirty-five percent) possessed outbuildings, most of which were barns, although there were also two blacksmith shops, one hay house, and one barn house listed. The assessments of the ninety-eight renters show thirty-four outbuildings, although there is a larger variety in the types of structures listed, among which are fulling mills, gristmills, and "shops." Whether any renters had access to these buildings as part of lease agreements remains unclear. For example, Frederick Hoppenstedt and his family of five resided in the hamlet of Libertyville on one acre of land owned by Abraham Hardenbergh. The family lived in a fifteen-by-fourteen log house assessed at ten dollars. The property as a whole, including a blacksmith shop, was assessed at forty dollars. Another renter, Thomas Rogers, lived with his wife and five young children in a tiny, fourteen-by-twelve house on twelve acres owned by Garrit DuBois. Jeremiah Wesimiller was a tenant in a somewhat better situation: he and his wife Syntie Strickland and presumably their young son lived in a thirty-by-twenty wood frame house situated on ninety-nine acres owned by Cornelius DuBois "on the Road from Goshen to Kingston." The property also contained a forty-by-thirty barn and an "old shop," the dimensions of which were unspecified. While many tenants rented from the town’s old Huguenot and Dutch families, others rented from newcomers or non-resident landowners. One such landowner, Getting Colding, owned over 600 acres of land worth $4,680. Another was considerably less wealthy: Jonathan Presler lived with his family in a thirty-by-twenty-five wood frame house that was described as "out of repair." Presler leased four houses on small lots adjoining his property to different tenants, one of whom may have been his son. Of the four houses, two were wood frame while the others were built of logs. None of his properties had outbuildings.

In response to the needs of the growing destitute population, the primary responsibility for poor relief at New Paltz shifted from the church to the town government. While it is unlikely that church efforts to help the town’s poor ceased completely, there is no hint of relief activities to be found in the records after 1736. At the same time, poor relief came to occupy more and more of the town’s expenses.31 On December 31, 1768, the New York Colonial Legislature passed "An Act for the Relief of the Poor in the Counties of Ulster and Orange." The text of the law makes it very clear that towns were concerned about the effect of the newcomers on their municipal budgets:

WHEREAS the poor of the said Counties of Ulster and Orange are of late so much more numerous than formerly and will become very Burthensome unless a suitable provision be made to prevent Idleness, and relieve only such as are really Indigent and helpless;32

To deal with the problem, the legislature required that each town elect two overseers of the poor every year to "make prudential Rules and Order for the Sustenance of the Poor binding out as Apprentices the Children of such parents as are unable to maintain them and for compelling such persons to work as have no Visible Way of gaining an honest Livelihood."33 The late date of this law is somewhat surprising, considering that similar laws were passed for other counties as early as 1740. For its part, New Paltz appears to have first elected overseers of the poor in 1751, although it is possible that they had elected them as early as 1743.34 The first two overseers that we know of were Abraham LeFevre and Hendricus DuBois, both elected in 1751.35 Other frequently-elected overseers of the poor include Daniel Hasbrouk, Josiah Elting, Samuel Bevier, Simon DuBois, Petrus LeFevre, Josiah R. Elting, and Nathaniel Potter.

New Paltz, along with the neighboring towns of Kingston and Marlborough, adopted the provisions stipulated in the 1786 Act. They levied taxes and budgeted amounts for use by the overseers of the poor to provide food, clothing, medical attention, or funeral services for indigent residents.36 In 1770, New Paltz passed an ordinance ordering poor children to be bound out as apprentices to freeholders willing to make payment to the overseers of the poor. Female children could be contracted out until they were eighteen years of age, while boys could be bound out as late as twenty-one. The ordinance also stipulated that all persons within the said town and the neighborhoods thereunto annexed, who have no visible way of gaining an honest livelihood shall, by the Overseers of the Poor for the time being, be compelled to work, at the rate of two Shillings per day for an able bodied man, and one Shilling per [day] for a man of less ability of body.37 It is possible to identify the monies raised by the town for poor relief for fifteen of the years between 1770 and 1816, although records for the remaining years are missing. The historical literature suggests an overall increase in per capita poor relief expenditures both locally and throughout America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.38 At New Paltz the poor relief budget fluctuated significantly.39

### Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Type</th>
<th>Average Assessment</th>
<th>Number of Houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Frame (Schedule A)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Frame (Schedule B)</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick</td>
<td>$580</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


31 The subject of poor relief in America has received a fair amount of attention from historians. The two most readily available books on the subject are Walter I. Trattner, From Poor Law to Welfare State: a history of social welfare in America, 3rd edition (New York, 1984), and Michael B. Katz, In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A social history of welfare in America (New York, 1988). A more recent work is Ruth Wallis Hernon, Unwelcome Americans: living on the margin in early New England (Philadelphia, 2001).

32 More informal (although no less effective) work on poor houses in New York State has been done recently by Linda Crammell, the self-described "Poorhouse Lady," Locally, the Ulster County Poorhouse Project, spearheaded by historian and educator Susan Sussman-Cohn and supported by the Ulster County Archives, has done much to tell the story of the poorhouse and its inhabitants.


34 Ibid.

35 Beatrice Hasbrouck Wadlin, Times and Tales of Town of Lloyd (Lloyd, N.Y., 1974), 116.

36 Town Election and Meeting Records, 1712-1902. NPTR.


cantly from year to year, although an overall increase in expenditures can be perceived (see Table 4).

Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount Raised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>14 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>30 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>10 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>25 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>15 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>25 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>37 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>40 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>55 pounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>30 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>100 dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>200 dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>400 dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>700 dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>400 dollars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In New Paltz, as elsewhere, public relief was provided to the poor by various means. Overseers of the poor sometimes used town funds to provide goods, services, or cash directly to indigents. Another method involved contracting with someone in the community to care for individual paupers. Some of these contracts resulted from auctions at which paupers were sold to the lowest bidder, who agreed to provide care for the least amount of government aid. The town also set day wages for able-bodied indigents who were sometimes required to labor on behalf of the town.40

Before public funds could be expended for the poor, the overseers were required to determine whether the applicant was a legal resident, since many paupers were temporary rather than long-term inhabitants.41 Transients who traveled from place to place seeking work were often viewed with suspicion by locals. Town leaders were often reluctant to grant relief to transients, requiring even those paupers who had lived in a community for many years to provide proof of residence before they could receive aid. In an effort to defray the costs of supporting transients, townships attempted to return the indigents to their previous places of residence. As a result of this system (usually referred to as “warning out”), paupers could be passed between townships while the respective overseers and judges argued over who should cover the cost.

Local records reveal several disputes between New Paltz and other towns over transient paupers. The first case appears in 1766, when the constable of Shawangunk was ordered to arrest Nancy Smith, a stranger, who is likely to become a charge to the town; she is to be delivered to the constable of New Paltz and so from constable to constable to some place in which she has remained 40 days, which she says is Kingston.42

In a 1791 case, the town of Fishkill in Dutchess County reimbursed New Paltz for providing support to Gideon Rogers and his family.43 The following year, the justices of the Ulster County Court of Common Pleas determined that another pauper, Joseph Hegeman, should be supported by New Paltz rather than the town of Flatbush in Kings County, where he had applied for relief.44 In yet another case, New Paltz paid the overseers of the poor in Sandlake, Rensselaer County “towards the support of Gideon Dean & his wife.” The bill included unspecified provisions for the family as well as reimbursements for the travel and postage expenses of the Sandlake overseers.45

Historian Ruth Herndon has argued that “in practice, some people were more likely to be cared for than others.” Specifically, she cites women—and particularly mothers with illegitimate children—as being exceptionally vulnerable to selective policies.46 Both church and state considered the care of illegitimate children to be both a moral and financial problem and tried various methods to get the parents to take responsibility for their offspring. However, there were differences in the ways the two institutions handled the care of illegitimate children. For example, the Reformed Dutch Church at Kingston ordered in 1735 that illegitimate children could be baptized only if they met one of three criteria:

1) That the parents, at least the mother, of the illegitimate child shall make confession and shew repentance for her transgression in the consistory, 2) They shall be confessed Reformed blameless members, and 3) With the promise, if the consistory so asks, of Holy education of the child.47

In contrast, town officials were less concerned with contrition than with the ability of the parents to provide for the child’s material needs. The courts directed most of their efforts toward determining the identities of the parents and ordering them (or their relatives) to pay for the child’s support. For example, in March 1695, Geertruy Hendrix of Kingston accused Barent Cool of fathering her child. Cool’s denial of the charge must have sounded hollow to the judges, for they ordered him “to give security that the child does not become a charge upon the parish.”48 In 1789, the court ordered John Campbell of Shawangunk to pay “five pounds up front and three shillings weekly” for a child he conceived with Vinite Vanvliet of Marlborough “as long as the child is chargeable to the town.”49 And, in 1722, Grietje Brass swore “that her bastard child was begotten by Robin, a Negro slave of Albert Roosa.” Whereas Robin was a slave and could not legally be the guardian of his offspring, Robin’s owner agreed to provide for the child in the event that the mother could not.50

40 Town Election and Meeting Records, 1712-1902. NPTR.
41 Wermuth, 37.
42 Herndon, 2.
43 Scott, NYSB Records, 61: 212.
44 Town Minutes and Election Records, 1770-1796. NPTR.
45 Joseph Hegeman Poor Relief Document (1792). MSS Collection, HHS.
46 Overseers of the Poor Records, 1820-1882. NPTR.
47 Herndon, p. 21-22.
49 Scott, NYSB Record, 60: 277.
Detailed testimony from one case in 1833 helps to further illustrate the efforts by the courts to make the parents take responsibility for their children. On September 3, Jacob J. Hasbrouck, overseer of the poor at New Paltz, brought a suit against Amos Hait, Jr. for fathering the child of Mary Church. The prosecution wanted to establish that Hait was the true father and that he would be able to provide support for the child, but Hait argued that other men could have been the father and that Mary’s family was wealthier than his and, therefore, better positioned to provide for the child. Unfortunately, there are no extant records that reveal the outcome of the dispute.57

Another case is that of an aged widow, Eghje Deyo, who applied unsuccessfully to the town for support in 1805. Consistent with their efforts to minimize municipal expenses, the court found that Eghje’s family possessed sufficient wealth to take care of her and ordered them to reimburse the overseers of the poor for money expended on her behalf.58

In addition to illegitimate children and widows, orphans also formed a significant portion of the town’s indigent population. In 1785, Frederick Hynes (or Heyms) agreed to “keep and Maintain John Griffen Junr (being a poor boy), with Sufficient Meat, Drink, Washing, Lodging and Mending, in the ensuing Year, for the Sum of Nine pounds fifteen Shillings.”59 In a seemingly unrelated case, John Hood received twelve pounds and nineteen shillings in 1794 to care for a woman named Margaret Griffin.60 As in the case of John Griffin, Jr., this contract was renewed in following years.

The search for information about Margaret and John Jr. proved frustrating, but some clues came to light concerning this family’s struggle for survival. The first reference to the Griffin family in New Paltz is found in the records of the local Reformed Dutch Church, where the pastor recorded the baptism of Martin Griffin in 1739.61 Martin appears to have had at least a couple of siblings, including Joseph, Seletie, and Rebecca, and there may have been others that went unrecorded. Of the siblings, Joseph seems to have been the oldest. He married Margrietta Wieler, probably sometime in the early 1750s. Their first child was baptized in the Reformed Church in 1754, and several followed over the course of the next twelve years. Martin married Rachel Soper, by whom he had five children between 1768 and 1786. Seletie, born in 1745, married Solomon Bevier about 1773 and had nine children before she died in 1820.62

Joseph is the only family member found on the 1765 tax roll. He was assessed at a mere three shillings, very near the bottom of the list. Two separate inventories of his estate were recorded in November 1787.63 From the records it is clear that his wife, Rachel, survived him. Rachel is listed in the 1790 census heading a household that seems to have included not only her own children but those of her late brother-in-law, Joseph, as well. Joseph’s widow, Margaret, is very likely the woman mentioned in the John Hood contracts of 1794 and 1796.

Several members of the Yelverton family also received support from the town. The first was Abraham Yelverton who, on May 17, 1814, was “Admitted and Ordered by Jacob E Heremanse to be Suitably Re­lieved on Account of being blind but not to Exceede in Expenence One Dollar and Seventy five Cents pr. Week.”64 Three years later, Mary Yelverton and her four young children, one of whom was illegitimate, were sent back to New Paltz from the overseers of the poor in Junius in Seneca County. Throughout the next thirteen years, Mary and her children periodically received additional aid, including foodstuffs, wood, and medical treatment. During this period, Mary’s eight-year old daughter Catherine was bound out to a local farmer named Philip Buckhout, who was to provide for the girl until she came of age at eighteen. Buckhout agreed to “teach and instruct the said girl in the art of good house keeping,” and provide her with sufficient meat, drink, apparel, lodging, washing, and all necessary accommodations for a servant girl, that he will Cause her to be instructed to read and write, and at the expiration of the said term give the said girl Duble apparel and one new Bible . . . [which would be] Chargeable to the said Town.

In return, Catherine was to “Serve[,] his

Letter from the Overseers of the Poor from the Town of Clinton to the Town of New Paltz discussing a pauper named Catherine Delamater, 1821. Overseers of the Poor Records, 1820-1882. New Paltz Town Records (1677-1932). MSS Collection, Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, N.Y.

Secrets keep and his lawful commands obey, She Shall Do no Damage to hur Master nor See it Done by others without giving him notice thereof.”65 The family was still in financial trouble nine years later, when Mary’s oldest daughter received medical attention from a physician named Barnabus Benton at town expense.66

Poor blacks, most of whom were freed slaves, comprise another significant group frequently receiving public relief, for the

49 Orders of Filiation, 1774-1799, Ulster County Court Records. Ulster County Archives, Kingston, NY.
50 Ibid., vol. 61, 60.
51 Jacob J. Hasbrouck, overseers of the poor of the Town of New Paltz v. Amos Hait, 1833. Ulster County Court Records. Ulster County Archives, Kingston, NY.
52 Court Order, 1805. Ulster County Court Records. Ulster County Archives, Kingston, NY.
53 Town Meeting and Election Records, 1712-1892. NPTR.
54 Ibid.
55 NPORC, 95.
56 Dake Andre Bevier, The Bevier Family: It’s history and genealogy (Published by the author, 2000), 105.
58 Account Book, 1805-1899. NPTR.
59 Catharine Yelverton Bond of Servinade (1821). MSS Collection, Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY. See also: Wadlin, 117.
60 Overseers of the Poor Records, 1820-1882. NPTR.

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majority of those freed as a result of the 1799 New York State Manumission Act faced severe poverty after gaining their liberty. A few examples from the local records help to document the hardships experienced by a brave but ill-treated minority.

The first case is that of Sime, who is identified in 1809 as a slave of Peter LeFevre, a local judge. An account book kept by LeFevre contains a running record of work performed by Sime and another slave. LeFevre promised Sime that "if he served me nine years from the 12th day of April 1809 faithfully and honestly and at the end of said term obtain a certificate of the Poor Masters as the Law required, then he is to be manumitted." LeFevre kept his promise to Sime, but, unfortunately, the latter, who may by that time have been an old man, only lived another year. On November 14, 1818, New Paltz Justice of the Peace Joseph Deyo directed the Overseers of the Poor to "allow him such Reasonable support as his situation Requires he being poor and sick and also for the Expense of his Burial in case of his Decease." One year later, the overseers arranged the former slave's funeral. While the mourners enjoyed rum and tobacco at the town's expense, Sime's body was clothed, wrapped in a muslin shroud, set in a coffin, and prepared for burial. The town also paid for the "Use of Waggon & horses for carrying the Coffin from Benj. H. Deyo's to Freer's & the Corpse from there to the grave." Ironically, the records seem to indicate a decent funeral paid by the town.

Another example is that of Bomefree, the elderly father of Isabella, the slave who would later become known as the great abolitionist Sojourner Truth. After working for the Hardenbergh family for nearly his entire adult life, Bomefree apparently no longer held any economic value and came to be perceived as a burden. Unlike Sime, and for reasons that are unknown, Truth's father did not receive support from the town during his last years. He wandered from house to house before settling in a remote cabin where he froze to death, alone and impoverished. Historian Myra Armstrong has described the plight of Bomefree as a "cruel refrain" in which he was "doomed to homelessness [and] perpetual spatial liminality." Recently widowed, this blind, frail, and "poor old man," as his daughter described him, would be forevermore his miserable condition on the few occasions when she was allowed to visit him:

"Oh," he would exclaim, "I had thought God would take me first,—Mau-mau [his wife] was so much smarter than I, and could get about and take care of herself;—and I am so old, and so helpless. What is to become of me? I can't do anything more—my children are all gone, and here I am left helpless and alone."65

In contrast, the case of John A. Freer shows how the New Paltz overseers of the poor would, on occasion, provide considerable support to black families in need. For almost three months during the fall of 1819, the overseers visited Freer and his family no less than ten times to deliver medical attention, food, and other necessary supplies. Both the volume and the variety of the goods provided are impressive. On October 1, for example, the family received large quantities of bread and flour along with 1 1/2 gallons of vinegar, one quart of wine, and a pound of sugar. On other occasions, the overseers furnished the family with candles, soap, molasses, tea, Indian meal, butter, apples, mutton, and even chocolate. All references to the family disappear after December 9, and it is assumed that either they no longer needed assistance or left the vicinity. It is unclear why the elderly Bomefree was so neglected by comparison.

At first glance, the experiences of the poor in New Paltz may appear similar over the years from the early 1700s to the 1820s. Throughout this entire period, the poor population included illegitimate children, widows, orphans, transients, and people suffering from illness or injury. Whether relief was provided by church or town, indigents received food, medical attention, clothing, and sometimes even cash. However, by most accounts (and despite continuing until 1976) the Ulster County Poorhouse was an utter failure. Instead of providing appropriate, inexpensive care, it offered only institutionalized poverty, with minimal provisions of food, inadequate medical attention, and harsh treatment by corrupt overseers. According to one historian, poorhouses in general were "misogynous, poorly managed, underfunded institutions, trapped by their own contradictions, [and] failed to meet any of the goals so confidently predicted by their sponsors."66 In 1861, conditions were so deplorable that critics exclaimed that a "sane person placed in this wretched abode for six months, would become a raving maniac."7 The Victorian answer to the poorhouse problem proved to be greater institutionalization and isolation. The days of simple community public assistance programs were at an end, and not until the Great Depression and the Roosevelt era did some measure of competence and compassion reemerge in the treatment of the poor.

66 Account Book, 1805-1909. NPTR.
68 Sojourner Truth with Olive Gilbert, Narrative of Sojourner Truth, reprint edition (Salem, N. H., 1892), 24-25.66 Ibid., 22.
70 In addition, mentally unstable individuals occasionally appear in area court records for receiving care. However, most of these cases involve members of wealthy families rather than indigents and therefore lie outside the scope of the present study.
71 Katz, 3.
Throughout most of the colonial period, the Flatbush Dutch Reformed Church was the only institution to organize social welfare services for the Flatbush community at large. Day-to-day responsibility for social welfare activities was in the hands of two deacons, each serving two years with one rotating every year. Important decisions were made in consultation with the other church council members: the domine and the elders.

Poor Relief in Pre-Revolutionary Flatbush, Long Island

by Eric Nooter

Assistance in Flatbush was provided to church member and non-member alike. Jan Spiegelaer, for example, is specifically identified as a member in the deacons' account books for January 2, 1685: “Jan Spiegelaer who is member of the congregation of Midwout.” On other occasions, aid recipients were identified only as a “member of Christ’s church” or a “brother of the congregation.” Francois Du Puis, who first received assistance on December 20, 1678, was entered with his wife, Geertje Willems Van Boerum, as a new member by Domine Casparus Van Zuuren in April 1679. Du Puis and his family continued to receive support on several more occasions through February 1683. Similarly, when Jan Sprang received alms and monies for room and board in 1675 and 1676, he was not yet a member of the Flatbush Dutch Reformed Church but was recorded as a new member by Van Zuuren in September 1678. Of the dozen or so aid recipients identified by name for the period for which official membership data are available (1677-1693), only Spiegelaer and Du Puis are listed as members.

Inhabitants of Flatbush were of course, the first beneficiaries of the deacons’ expenditures, but aid recipients regularly included people from the neighboring villages of Brooklyn, Flatlands, and New Utrecht as well as Bushwick and Gravesend. Over time, Brooklyn, Flatlands, and New Utrecht had their own deacons, kept their own records, and were responsible for their own social welfare projects. These three towns and Flatbush were committed, however, to assisting one another with loans or gifts. Among the people helped by the Flatbush deacons were a “poor man at Gouwanes” in Brooklyn, a “child at Gravesend,” “Hester of Bushwick,” and two men at New Utrecht, one only identified by his first name, Christian, and the other as Pieter Jacobz. But aid was also given to individuals outside of Kings County. Examples include Hendrick, the “goat herder” on Staten Island, Abraham Van Dijck “living on New York’s island,” Anna Siffes “residing under Westchester,” Richard Cook of Hackensack, and a Van Dorn living in the Raritan Valley.

1 Studies stressing the central role of the deaconry in social welfare services in Dutch communities are H. Gras, Op de grens van het bestaan: Armen en armenzorg in Drenthe 1790-1800 (Zuidlaren, 1980), which discusses poor relief in the province of Drenthe, Netherlands, primarily in the eighteenth century, and Janny Venema, Kinderen van weilde en armoede: Armoe de on jeugdlij vlijd in Beverwijk/Albany (c. 1650-c. 1700) [Hilversum, 1993], a reworked Dutch version of her earlier “For the Benefit of the Poor; Poor Relief in Albany/Beverwijk 1652-1700,” (M.A. Thesis, State University of New York, Albany, 1996), which studies poor relief in seventeenth-century Albany. The first overseers of the poor were not selected until 1772. Flatbush Town Records, Court Minutes 1679-1681: 1007: 57, New York City Municipal Archives.

2 Flatbush Dutch Reformed Church Records, Deacons’ Accounts, 2 vols. 1654-1709 and 1710-1797, Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, Flatbush, New York, 1: 63 [hereafter cited as FDA]. Jan Spiegelaer and his wife, Grietje, were recorded as new members on Casparus Van Zuuren’s list of new members for the years 1677-1685. Flatbush Dutch Reformed Church Records, 1: 178.

3 FDA 1654-1709: 39, 40, 51.

4 Ibid., 1654-1709: 37; Flatbush Consistory Minutes, 1: 178.

5 FDA 1654-1709: 34, 43, 50, 51.

6 Ibid., 1654-1709: 37; Flatbush Consistory Minutes, 1: 178.


8 For the Brooklyn deacons’ records for the period 1660-1664, see A. P. G. Jos van der Linde, Old First Dutch Church of Brooklyn, New York: First Book of Records, 1660-1752 (Baltimore, Md., 1983), 165-87. For the Flatlands deacons’ records, starting in 1671, compare the Flatlands Dutch Reformed Church Records microfilm in the Brooklyn Historical Society. For the New Utrecht deacons’ records, which date back to c. 1679 see the New Utrecht Dutch Reformed Church Records collections.

9 FDA, 1654-1709: 98 (1658), 17 (1668), 22, 26; ibid., 1710-97: 13, 28, 73.

10 Ibid., 1654-1709: 59, 67; ibid., 1710-97: 13, 28, 73.
Support was also extended to other congregations. Sometimes these were only characterized as “a needy church” or “a weak congregation;” at other times, the information was a little more specific. So, in 1764, the deacons made a contribution toward the construction of a church for the congregation of Hopewell, New Jersey. Two years later, they gave money for the building of a church within the limits of Pennsylvania, and in 1767, they supported carpentry work at a “German Reformed church” in Albany. Even the Lutheran congregation of New York received support in 1772.

Apart from Dutch men and women, the recipients included people from other nationalities, although they were frequently not further identified beyond nationality, sex, age group, sometimes occupation, and/or first name. Francois Du Puis came originally from France, where he, very likely, had been a member of the Huguenot or French Reformed church. By the time he married Geertje Willems van Boerum in New York in 1671, or at least when he and his wife became members of the Dutch Reformed church in Flatbush in 1677, they and their children must have been considered members of the Dutch community. Scandinavians like Hendrik Oeleisen “the Swede,” Lourens the “Dane,” and Hans the “Norman,” who most likely originated in Norway, were, in all likelihood considered at least culturally Dutch.

Among the recipients of aid from the Flatbush deaconry were several Englishmen. Apparently, the English conquest of New Netherland in 1664 did not prevent the Flatbush deacons from giving alms to “an English soldier” in the same year. Among those assisted in the second half of the 1660s were an old English woman and her daughter and a “poor Englishman” who received alms at the request of Domine Johannes Theodorus Polhemus. In the eighteenth century a poor man from New England named Jan Davies was helped as well as Edward Beaty, an Irishman, and his family. The Flatbush deacons also set monies aside for a poor sick German in New York City and for the support of French prisons.

The deacons gave monies to persons they knew but also to people they did not know at all. This last category included those described as “stranger,” “wanderer,” “passerby” or “beggar.” Frequently, people were not identified beyond being poor.

Among the most vulnerable people were orphans, mentally and/or physically impaired adults, and families without the support of a breadwinner. A child at Gravesend, for example, appears, from related 1669-1670 entries, to have been an orphan who had recently lost both parents. The child, who was sick and would die a year later, was taken care of by the deacons during that time. Other people, who would have had a hard time making it on their own and who appear in the account books as aid recipients, were Malle Ocke, who was mentally impaired, a poor man with a wooden leg, a poor woman with two blind children, and Neeltje van Deventer, whose husband and apparent breadwinner, Jan, was in jail. The deacons also absorbed the funeral costs for cobble Pieter Schoemaker and his son in 1662 and for Isaac Klaesen in 1690. In 1659, they paid for the burials of Barent Baltus and Hendrick Oeleisen, the Swede. When the deacons paid for Bettie Groef’s funeral in 1755, they took care of the doctor’s fees as well, and when laying out money for Jacob Suydam’s burial in 1770 they paid for his boarding costs. In 1770 they also started listing expenses for the support of Dettie Dorlandt, who continued to be helped through the summer of 1778, when she died. The final payment in her behalf was for her funeral.

Monies were also directly made available to those in need. The amounts of money distributed and the number of times aid was given varied widely. Most cash or wampum disbursements were relatively small. With larger sums, the motive for the gift was more frequently provided, but not always. Special low-interest or even interest-free loans were also made available on occasion.

Throughout the colonial period, several people and their families received assistance when devastated by a fire. In 1675, a major fire broke out in New Utrecht. Jasper Danckers commented in 1679: “This village was burned down some time ago, with everything about it. Many persons were impoverished by the fire.” In early April 1675, the deacons first gave 200 guilders to those burned out at New Utrecht and three weeks later provided an additional twelve guilders to an individual of that village, who was not further identified. In January 1676, Hans Jacobsen received twenty guilders because he had been burned out. In March 1678, Dirck Jansz Hooglandt, not listed on Domine Van Zuuren’s membership rolls, received 200 guilders “since he had the fire.” In January 1699, twenty guilders were given to an unidentified family whose property was burned. In March 1720, Richard Miller, an Englishman who lived outside of Kingsport, received 200 guilders for the support of a family that was burned out. In 1720, Richard Miller, an Englishman who lived outside of Kingsport, received 200 guilders for the support of a family that was burned out.

**Nature and Scope of Assistance.** Assistance was often provided in kind. Blouses, shirts, undershirts, stockings, trousers for men, shoes, and blankets were among the items most frequently distributed to those in need. The deacons sometimes commissioned artisans to make the clothing and paid for the linen or wool, thread, buttons, and other materials. Food, mostly rye or wheat, or fuel were other examples of aid-in-kind.

Account book entries show that the deacons regularly paid for room and board for those who did not have a home and/or could not care for themselves. The orphan from Gravesend, for example, boarded in 1660-1670 with a certain Machthelt, for which the latter was paid by the Flatbush deacons. Machthelt had earlier tended to the child’s parents during their sickness. A certain сем or sems, who would receive support from the Flatbush deaconry for almost thirty years, boarded during that time with at least three men, namely carpenter Aucke Jansen van Nuyse, Jan Tunis, and weaver Gijsbert Jansen, who were all reimbursed for their services. Prior to his death, Isaac Klaesen boarded with Engelhard Lot, who subtracted the money he earned from a loan he had received from the deacons.

For some, medical bills, such as doctors’ and hospital fees, were too high. In February 1699, for example, the deacons reimbursed their colleagues in New York City for the hospital expenses of Ambrose Backer. Between 1671 and 1674, they paid for two operations and other expenses in New York on Antoni Janisz by Dr. Thylcr. In 1759, they saw to the doctor’s fees of Sara Trent, and in 1773, they paid “Dr. Van Buren for doctoring of a poor person.” The deacons also absorbed the funeral costs for cobbler Pieter Schoemaker and his son in 1662 and for Isaac Klaesen in 1690. In 1659, they paid for the burials of Barent Baltus and Hendrick Oeleisen, the Swede. When the deacons paid for Bettie Groef’s funeral in 1755, they took care of the doctor’s fees as well, and when laying out money for Jacob Suydam’s burial in 1770 they paid for his boarding costs. In 1770 they also started listing expenses for the support of Dettie Dorlandt, who continued to be helped through the summer of 1778, when she died. The final payment in her behalf was for her funeral.

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County, was given eighty guilders “out of compassion” because of a fire. Hester of Bushwick received three years later one hundred guilders “for rebuilding her house that was burned.” Another Englishman, Richard Cook, who lived with his wife and children in Hackensack, New Jersey, and whose house had burned down, received one English pound and twelve shillings in April 1732. In May of the following year, ten more shillings were distributed to another unidentified man who had a fire. In the mid 1720s and early 1730s, the Flatbush deacons took out monies on several occasions to release people from jail, presumably to help lighten the burden of families who had lost their breadwinner. A November 32, 1731, Flatbush deacons’ account book entry specified “alms given to Neeltje van Deventer to obtain the release of her husband from prison.” Earlier, in 1725, they had provided money to release Jan Oucken from prison and, in 1730, they contributed to help arrange Andries Woertman’s release.

The Flatbush deacons were keen on helping people help themselves. If someone had a chance to make a living by himself or herself, a formula was devised in which the person being helped was given the chance to remain independent. For example, in 1669, the deacons rented a spinning wheel with two reels for the wife of Jan van Culen. The condition for the loan was that if she were to leave Flatbush she had to reimburse the deaconry or give the spinning wheel back. The deacons had bought this spinning wheel, worth thirty guilders on another, “as agreed upon.”

The deacons also employed people they helped out in other ways, presumably to make them less dependent on their aid. At the end of 1689, for example, they paid thirty guilders to Francois Du Puis and his children for “master wages,” possibly for some carpentry. Du Puis was also listed as receiving four guilders and ten stuivers for clothing, and Abraham Lefoy receiving thirty guilders on one occasion and 400 guilders on another, “as agreed upon.”

Relatively few people in colonial Flatbush went through relatively trouble-free times, the deacons must have realized that it was impossible to eradicate poverty even had they wanted to. Most of them probably accepted a society in which rich and poor coexisted and where those who had more than others had the duty to share with the less privileged. The deacons probably felt obligated, first of all, to determine what was good for the Flatbush Dutch Reformed congregation and Flatbush society at large, which must have meant a mixture of altruism and individualism. They somehow decided, even though this might not have been verbalized explicitly, what degree of pauperism was acceptable and how many people or what percentage of the population could be left at least partially impoverished without affecting the functioning of the Flatbush community and its image in the outside world.

The majority of the aid provided by the Flatbush deacons during the colonial period was supplementary in nature and only given for a limited time. Relatively few people in colonial Flatbush received long-term assistance. On occasion, though, the deaconry could be found committing itself for a lengthy period. In the case of Seem or Sems, aid lasted for almost thirty years, from December 1681 through December 1710, and amounted to several thousand guilders.

In analyzing the expenditures for the welfare services as recorded in the Flatbush deacons’ account books since 1654, one concludes that the various deacons and their fellow church council members did not follow a specific church policy for providing charity and relief in colonial Flatbush. A great diversity in meting out assistance can be observed. Often, the criteria for giving are not clear. Every case must have been, basically, judged by itself. It seems that the deacons’ activities were guided by what H. Gras in his study of poor relief in the province of Drenthe in the Netherlands succinctly labels as "rendementsprincipe," or the "efficiency principle," that is, aiming for maximum results while spending a minimum of funds. Such a principle could only be adopted successfully, though, where and in a time when economic prospects for a wide majority of the population were not too bleak and in the absence of major wars, revolutions, epidemics, and natural disasters. Colonial Flatbush fits this picture.

Even though colonial Flatbush went through relatively trouble-free times, the deacons must have realized that it was impossible to eradicate poverty even had they wanted to. Most of them probably accepted a society in which rich and poor coexisted and where those who had more than others had the duty to share with the less privileged. The deacons probably felt obligated, first of all, to determine what was good for the Flatbush Dutch Reformed congregation and Flatbush society at large, which must have meant a mixture of altruism and individualism. They somehow decided, even though this might not have been verbalized explicitly, what degree of pauperism was acceptable and how many people or what percentage of the population could be left at least partially impoverished without affecting the functioning of the Flatbush community and its image in the outside world.

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At least once a year, this man received shoes, stockings, trousers, and shirts. Materials, measurements, and wages to pay for making the clothing were frequently listed. As noted above, the deacons also provided payments to various community members for boarding him. Another example of long-term assistance was Trijntje Van Gelen, later called Trijntje Volleman, or Folman. She received, on average, one hundred guilders every three months for the support of her mentally impaired child for a period of at least nine years between 1715 and the child’s death in 1724. A third example is Betty Dorland. This woman was supported for more than eight years. Between May 1770 and May 1778, the deacons paid an average of three, later climbing to four, English pounds per quarter year for her room and board. They also provided her on several occasions with shoes and clothing and, once, with a small loan. They finally paid for her funeral as well.

Sources of Income: The Flatbush deacons received income for their charity, relief, and other social welfare work from a variety of sources. The most visible source of income was contributions received during church services. Small, voluntary donations in wampum or coins were deposited in a black bag, *sackie*, attached at the end of a long stick which the deacons and other church members assisting them passed during a break in the services. The total income from different church services could vary widely. Figures were influenced by factors like the number of people attending, the general economic climate, the generosity of the churchgoers, and the esteem in which the domine and church council were held at that time. The communion service, held only four times a year, usually brought in several times the amount of a regular Sunday morning or afternoon service. As mentioned above, not all the income from these communion services could be apportioned directly to welfare projects since there were some regular expenses for bread, wine, and carrying fees, and irregular payments for white tablecloths, napkins, and communion beakers.

Voluntary contributions were also collected from *armebussen*, or poor boxes, placed at strategic locations in the Flatbush community and emptied regularly. The first reference in Flatbush to such a poor box was in 1657, when one was placed on a wall in the home of Adriaen Hegeman, one of the deacons that year. The deacons also received income from the rental of shrouds, which were paid for out of welfare funds. Individuals also bequeathed money to the deaconry for charity purposes. Rutger Albertsz and his wife, Josyna Verhagen, for example, stipulated in their first will in 1689 that fifty guilders “wampum value” should be set aside for the poor. In their revised will, drawn up in 1700, the amount was doubled to one hundred guilders. From 1669, on the deacons also received money from the rent of a cow which had been donated that year by Evert van Wickelen. The yearly rent was set at twelve guilders, rising to fourteen guilders by 1702.

On occasion, a portion of fines imposed by civil courts, especially for slander and aggressive behavior, benefited charity work undertaken by the deaconry. Among the deacons’ receipts for 1666, for example, was twenty-five guilders handed over by then-constable Frans Barendsz Pastoor from a fine imposed on Klaes Mees. And, in 1669, Abraham Jorisz paid eight guilders for a fine imposed on Cornelis Barendsz. Because of the uncertain nature of their income, the deacons had to come up with additional, steadier income sources to build reserves, especially for more pressing times. Like their brethren in Dutch Reformed congregations in the Netherlands and other places in the New World, they gave out loans against interest to those whom they expected to be able to repay them. The interest percentage the Flatbush deacons charged throughout the colonial period appears to have been six percent. This was less than the ten percent Janny Venema found in her study of Albany during the last half of the seventeenth century.

Gras reported for the Netherlands five to six percent for the seventeenth century but only three percent for the eighteenth century. The amounts loaned and the time it took borrowers to repay their debts varied widely. It took, for example, Engelhardt Lot almost fourteen years to repay the thousand guilders he borrowed on March 22, 1683. Over the years Lot paid part of his debt by providing board, stockings, slippers, and tobacco to Isaack Klaesen and shoes to Seemen.

Money was lent to people outside of Flatbush and Kings County as well. The number of obligations issued and the total amount set out against interest grew dramatically over the years. The deaconry did not exhibit any outward signs of concern about the extent of those outstanding debts. The only limitation set by the Flatbush church council seems to have been a provision in 1765 that “in the future no money belonging to the poor of Flatbush shall be put out at interest, unless those who take it at interest who live outside the town shall furnish good sureties for said money of those who live in Kings County.” By providing loans against a rather low interest, the Flatbush deaconry functioned, in fact, as a local bank. This service must have effectively prevented many Flatbush inhabitants from having to borrow money in nearby New York City where they would undoubtedly have been more susceptible to English influences.

Conclusion. Throughout most of the colonial period, the Flatbush Dutch Reformed church does not seem to have followed a specific church policy for providing charity relief. The deacons’ activities were, basically, guided by the principle to spend minimal funds for maximum results. The majority of the aid provided by the Flatbush deacons was supplementary in nature and only given for a limited period of time. The deacons helped to build reserves with the income from loans to those who could pay them back with interest. Flatbush inhabitants were reminded of the plight of those who were not so well off during every church service when a collection was held for the poor and at the sight of the poor box hanging outside one of the deacons’ homes. Both the social welfare projects organized by the church for those in need and its function as a bank for the better-off further help explain why the church could play a central role in the Flatbush community’s identification with Dutch culture for such a long time.

32 FDA, 1654-1709: 91, 198.
33 FDA, 1710-1797: 7–18.
34 FDA, 1654-1709: 14.
36 See Eric Nooter “Between Heaven and Earth: Church and Society in Pre-Revolutionary Flatbush, Long Island” (Ph.D. diss., Vrije Universiteit, 1994), chapter 4.
37 FDA, 1654-1709: 91, 98.
38 FDA, 1654-1709: 108 ff.
40 FDA, 1654-1709: 106 f., Van der Linde, Old First Dutch Church of Brooklyn, n. 264-269.
41 FDA, 1654-1709: 65.
42 H. Graa, Diaconenarchie of Laren, een Gids voor historischonderzoek, samengesteld op basis van archieven en inventarissen voor Hervormde gemeenten in Utrecht en Overijssel (Assen, 1988), 70, 70, Graa, Gens van bestaan, 140.
43 FDA, 1654-1709: 56-94.
44 FDA, 1710-1797: 72.
Book Reviews


The caricature of sleepy Hollanders doing little else than sitting in the sun and smoking their pipes—created by Washington Irving in the early nineteenth century—has had a long-lasting influence on the image of Dutch colonists in New Netherland. And yet, New Yorkers attach great value to gaining an understanding of this once-Dutch colony, as evidenced by the funding and the effort the state of New York put between 1818 and 1939 into the publication of historical writings of the colony and the translation of its original Dutch-language source materials.

The federal government is also aware of the value of these sources. Since 1974 it has, through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), provided financial support to the New York State Library to maintain the New Netherland Project. That project, under the direction of Dr. Charles T. Gehring, not only produces translations and transcriptions but has become a clearinghouse for information regarding New Netherland, and the organizer of annual seminars on various themes concerning the colony. Studies of New Netherland have increased ever since: no less than fourteen books as well as dissertations, theses, and numerous articles have been devoted to it since 1974 using the materials available at the NNP.

It remains difficult, nevertheless, to come to a good understanding of this odd man out in American colonial history. Other than documents, there are not many visible reminders of the once-Dutch presence. One feels fortunate to find a page or two in high school history texts emphasizing the English dominating the colonial scene. Culture, as brought over from the Dutch Republic to New Netherland, never has become truly familiar to most Americans, who, at most, can taste something of the Dutch Golden Age while visiting the Netherlands. In addition, most Americans are not fluent in the Dutch language. Especially for researchers specializing in the Dutch colonial period, this is, despite many well-indexed translations (of which some are searchable on CD-ROM), a difficult situation in which often obsolete translations are being used. How frustrating it was to know that a highly-praised overview was published in the Dutch language which clearly explains how colonists brought over to America Dutch institutions, moral codes, ways of behavior, and their culture, how all of this was applied and used, and how it was possible that this culture could exist long after the English conquered New Netherland.

Fortunately, Brill Publishers has now published in English this dissertation, written by Jaap Jacobs, in their series named The Atlantic World. Americans will not be disappointed in their high expectations, as Jacobs thoroughly went to work. Some maps of colony and mother country make clear where it all occurred, while a glossary reassures the reader that he or she will not be overwhelmed by incomprehensible foreign words. An extensive list of Dutch and American archives, ten appendices, a twenty-six-page bibliography, and an equally large index of names and subjects should greatly aid the reader’s own research. In the remaining 482 pages, Jacobs describes the development of New Netherland from a trading post to a settlement colony (1609-1674). The central question he poses is how and to what extent culture was transplanted from the Dutch Republic to New Netherland and which factors influenced the colonial culture. Jacobs uses Peter Burke’s definition of culture: “a system of shared meanings, attitudes and values, and the symbolic forms (performances, artifacts) in which they are expressed or embodied.” His conclusion is that New Netherland was more Netherlandish than new.

After a brief introduction and a description of flora, fauna, and native people, Jacobs divides his work into chapters on immigration, government, economy, religion, status, material culture, and mentality. Various sub-chapters and a pleasant style of writing make the book clearly structured and readable. To the translation of his book, completely rewritten from the original sources, Jacobs has added new research, both his own and that of others. More than fifty new publications were added to the bibliography, and from a newly-found source we learn that the Onrust was not the only ship built in the very early years of New Netherland; in the South River, another small ship, the IJzeren Verken (Iron Hog), was produced.

The author is consistent in reporting where the translations (if extant) and the original materials can be found. Almost always, he uses his own translations for quotations. Most of the time, these differ from those of the various other translators, which indicates how complicated the translation process can be. By devoting more than two pages to the meaning of the verb herideren (p. 374-376), he makes clear that translations are interpretations and that in order to fully understand the contents of the source materials, it is a basic requirement to have a command of the original language.

By consistently returning to his central question, the author offers the readers optimal and much-desired information about the society and the operation and functioning of various institutions from the perspective of the culture of the province of Holland. While this is a great strength of the book, it also causes the process of almost continuous change and adaptation to not be as prominent. In this new society, constantly in motion and development, most inhabitants, roughly divided into Company servants, free colonists, and inhabitants of the patroonships, originated from provinces other than Holland—often even from other countries. In my opinion, one of the most fascinating processes of this new society was how the inhabitants had to continually adjust not only to their new surroundings but also to each other and to the secular and ecclesiastical rules of Holland. They saw colonists arrive and leave. As ships brought merchants and news from the fatherland, they were building up new communities and adjusting to new rules following upon continually changing circumstances, while they became accustomed to various novelties, such as the ownership of slaves. One could, for example, wonder, what it meant to own those in a society without very large plantations. This process of adjustment and
the interaction with each other and with other peoples and nationalities developed in the New World in its own way and contributed to a new, American culture, with the highest government far away.

The coming and going of natives of different tribes with different languages must have greatly influenced the development of the New Netherland communities. According to Jacobs, natives were not part of colonial society—but is that surprising? Unlike Negroes and Jews (also immigrants), they were the original inhabitants with their own communities and cultures. They were trading partners—be it with a “barbarian” culture—and in meetings, means of payment, and other social inter-

actions, the colonists took into account their customs and traditions. Relations with natives often must have determined the colonists’ emotions and actions: during Kieft’s wars, for example, or during the Peach War, men, women, and children in New Amsterdam must have lived in great fear; and around Fort Orange, colonists felt that natives determined their entire existence. If, during the trading season, they came with their beaver skins, the economy flourished. But if hardly any natives showed, poverty and all its consequences threatened. While people in New Netherland in 1653 counted on the support of Mahicans and Mohawks to fend off an English attack, palisades were built six years later to protect the center of the community against the natives.

Portraying this, however, was not Jacobs’ intent. By staying close to his central thesis, he offers American readers an insight into the organization and functioning of Dutch institutions and customs in the colony and how it was possible for various elements of that culture to survive for so long after. This approach will provide researchers with perspectives for their own research. This thoroughly researched book contributes significantly to the writing of American history.

— Janny Venema
New Netherland Institute

Here and There in New Netherland Studies

THE MACDONALD STEWART Art Centre of the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, is presenting from January 19 to May 21, 2006, an exhibition entitled “Landscape: Flemish, Dutch and French Prints of the ‘Golden Age’.” The exhibition is drawn from a collection of more than 600 prints promised to the University of Guelph from the Holland Society of New York Trustee Emeritus Andrew Brink and his wife, Helen, in memory of R. Alexander Brink and Edith Margaret Whitelaw Brink. This is the second such exhibition of works from The Brink Collection presented by the Art Centre.

“Landscape: Flemish, Dutch and French Prints of the ‘Golden Age’” features some of the most accomplished etchings, engravings, and mezzotints made at the height of the Dutch Renaissance, including graphics by Jan Brueghel, Jan van de Velde, Herman van Swanevelt, and Antoni Waterloo. In the seventeenth century, such prints widely circulated among a newly prosperous middle class. The present topic, “landscapes,” reveals an interest in nature engendered as the Low Countries became highly urbanized. More than forty graphic works document the development of such tastes from early Flemish printmaking to the Dutch and French landscape and pastoral achievements of the later seventeenth century. An exhibition catalog includes an essay by Andrew Brink. “Landscape: Flemish, Dutch and French Prints of the ‘Golden Age’” and the accompanying exhibition catalog are supported by the Ontario Council of the Arts.

HARTGEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL Associates of Albany presented, on Saturday, March 18, 2006, a Power-Point lecture at the Columbia County Museum in Kinderhook, New York, on the results of archeological excavations conducted at the 1737 Luykas van Alen House. The lecture was hosted by the Columbia County Historical Society, which owns both the Museum at 5 Albany Avenue in Kinderhook and the Van Alen house, located on Route 9H just outside the village. The archeological excavations had been undertaken as the result of Federal Save America’s Treasures and New York State Environmental Protection Fund grants, grants that require extensive archeological reviews of sites. The excavations uncovered considerable pre-Columbian materials as well as those relating to the site’s settlement and occupation by the Dutch. These new artifacts suggested reconsideration of the social and economic status of those who had lived on the site. Most interesting was the recovery of artifacts pertaining to the African slaves who played a role in the household. Those in attendance were able to view and handle some of the thousands of artifacts uncovered at the site.

The Van Alen house restoration project is planning completion for the 2006 season. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1968, the Luykas Van Alen House is a restored house museum representing eighteenth-century rural Dutch farm and domestic life. The house, featuring parapet gables, Dutch doors, and entrance stoops, stands as a testament to traditional Dutch architecture in the Hudson River Valley. Its interior is typical of the domestic settings in which many Hudson Valley Dutch farmers and merchants lived and worked. Large, jambless fireplaces dominate each room, with iron cooking utensils and period furnishings preserving a moment in time. Following the restoration of the structure, the furnishings will be reinstalled for the 2006 season. For further information call (518) 758-9265.
EIGHTY MEMBERS, FELLOWS, and Friends of the The Holland Society of New York attended the Society’s 120th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 4, 2006, at the Union Club in Manhattan. President William Van Winkle called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He then asked Burgher Guard Captain Sean Palen to lead the gathering in the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the Reverend Everett L. Zabriskie III’s invocation, President Van Winkle called for a motion to waive the reading of last year’s minutes. He then reported that thirty-six new Members and fifteen new Friends had joined the Society during the past year and introduced those present: James W. DeWitt, William J. DeWitt, Jr., William J. DeWitt III, Richard C. Ten Eyck, and Patrick Van Pelt. He then asked Richard C. Deyo to come forward to receive his Fifty-Year Membership pin.

Following the President’s address, Secretary Reverend Louis O. Springsteen read the necrology and Treasurer John E. Delamater made brief remarks about the financial condition of the Society. President Van Winkle then asked Colin Lazier, as Chair of the Nominating Committee, to read the incoming slate of new officers and trustees. The slate was approved unanimously.

President Van Winkle then gave a brief departing address, an accounting of the events of his presidency. He focused on the Five Points Program he initiated four years ago, including returning to the basic ideals of the Society, increasing Society membership, increasing branch activity, launching a capital campaign, and organizing a trip to Holland. He proudly noted the increase in Society membership during the past year as well as the increase of branch activities. President Van Winkle then invested new Society President W. Wells Van Pelt, Jr. President Van Pelt presented William Van Winkle with the Past President’s Medal, followed by a brief address by President Van Pelt thanking the Members for his election and stressing that the meaning of the Society is to remember the heritage of our fathers.

Cocktails and hors d’oeuvres with a cash bar followed the business meeting. With the traditional Parading of the Beaver and Seat of Authority, invocation, singing of the Dutch and American National anthems, and toasts, the gathering sat down to dine. Following dinner, President Van Pelt introduced Society Fellows, Dr. Firth Haring Fabend and Dr. Dennis Maika, and Friends Jacob Schiltcamp and Eugene Church. President Van Pelt next introduced Society Gold Medalist for Distinguished Achievement, John O. Delamater, and invested him with the Gold Medal. Mr. Delamater, who has faithfully served the Society as a Trustee and Officer for twenty years, gave a brief but wonderfully humorous speech relating his relationship with The Holland Society over the years.

With the conclusion of the formal activities, Members, Friends, and Fellows retired to an adjoining room to enjoy an informal cheese collation and beer donated by HEINEKEN USA.
Virginia and Carolinas’ Branch Meeting

The Virginia and Carolina’s Branch held its fifth annual meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, on February 4-6, 2006. Fifteen couples enjoyed a weekend with everything that this great city has to offer: history, architecture, exquisite food, and delightful shopping, all mixed with sunshine and downpours. It is indeed fitting that this historic city was the site of the meeting. Although Charleston has been referred to as “The Holy City” (probably because of the church steeples dotting the skyline), it also is known for its tolerance and decadence.

Early arrivals gathered in the lobby of the French Quarter Inn for a wine and cheese party and took the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and meet new friends. Henry Staats and his wife Margaret joined the gathering from the Old South Branch, John and Diane Vanderbeek traveled all the way from the Pacific North West, and Bill and Beverly Van Winkle took a deserved break from their drive north from Florida to arrive in time for dinner on Friday. On Saturday morning, a carriage ride through the historic city began as the heavens opened up. Fortunately, the carriages’ canopies kept the worst off their occupants, and the guides’ narrations and anecdotes kept everyone enthralled. A roaring fire in the hotel lobby was a draw in the afternoon, while some of the ladies in the group shopped famous King Street.

Carolina’s Restaurant, one of Charleston’s oldest fine dining venues, provided cocktails and dinner in the elegant Perdita’s Room. Guest of honor was undoubtedly Skylar Van Blarcom, the newest member of the Holland Society. He came along with his sister, his parents, his grandparents, and aunt and uncle—Van Blarcoms all. With much flailing of napkins, John Vanderbeek from the Pacific North West Branch challenged the Virginia and Carolinas Branch to join other Society Members for the Sailing Challenge to be held at the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club in Oyster Bay, New York, on June 9. At the business meeting the next morning, the Terry Ackerman turned the Branch presidency over to Jim Van Blarcom (Skylar’s uncle).

In attendance at the Meeting were Terry Ackerman and Monica Jones, Bob and Molly Banta, Stewart and Cathy DeWitt, Andy, Mary, and Jack Hendricks, Fred and Kanda Parsons, Henry and Margaret Staats, David and Helen Van Blarcom, James and Leigh Van Blarcom, Andrew, Lori, Skylar, and Nina Van Blarcom, Wells, Alison, Elizabeth and Mary Margaret Van Pelt, Donald and Lisa Van Riper, William and Beverly Van Winkle, and John and Diane Vanderbeek.

Burgher Guard Meeting

The Members of the Burgher Guard of The Holland Society of New York met at the Light Horse Tavern in Jersey City, New Jersey, on April 13, 2006. The Light Horse Tavern is named after Revolutionary War hero Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee III who, as captain of the fifth group of Virginia Light Dragoons, led his men on lightning raids against British supply trains. In a surprise attack at the old Dutch settlement of Paulus Hook, New Jersey, his troops captured 400 enemy soldiers with the loss of only one man. His adroit horsemanship earned him his nickname.

The Burgher Guardsmen, led by Captain Sean Palen, discussed ways in which they can assist the functions of the Society, conduct a program of their own, and exchange contact information to better enable members to grow in spirit and camaraderie. Future Burgher Guard meetings were planned for such historic locations as the Bridge Café, Ear Inn, McSorley’s, and P. J. Hanley’s. As the Guard has a budget of its own, the first $300 of cocktails and other drinks are gratis.
In Memoriam

Robert Donald Quackenbush

Holland Society of New York Life Member Robert Donald Quackenbush of Hackettstown, New Jersey, and Boca Raton, Florida, died on September 1, 2004, one month short of his eighty-third birthday. Mr. Quackenbush was born in Paterson, New Jersey, on October 2, 1921, the son of Joseph Henry Quackenbush and Lydia May Stauss. He claimed descent from Pieter Quackenbosch, who emigrated to Beverwijk (Albany) in 1657 from Oestegest, near Leiden, Holland. Mr. Quackenbush had been a Member of The Holland Society since 1952.

Mr. Quackenbush graduated from Hillside High School, Paterson, New Jersey, in 1940. Following highschool, he enlisted in the United States Army, rising to the rank of captain by the time of his discharge in 1946. A graduate of Fort Benning, Georgia, Officers’ Candidate School in 1942, he pursued various courses related to the military at Indiana University, New Jersey State College, and Washington and Lee University from 1944 to 1946. He fought in Africa, Italy, and France with the 3rd Infantry Division and was awarded three Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, the Combat Infantry’s Badge, and European Theater Ribbon. His unit was cited by the French government twice with the Croix De Guerre.

In 1954, Mr. Quackenbush joined Bankers National Life Insurance Company, where he rose to vice president of the Group Insurance Division in 1970. He also served as president and chairman of the board of the Consumer Credit Insurance Association in 1960, receiving their Arthur Morris Award. In 1970 he was named president of Central National Life Insurance Company of Omaha and affiliated insurance companies, and as chair and chief executive officer of the management committee, Beneficial Management Corporation. In 1978, he became chair and chief executive officer of Beneficial Insurance Group, serving until 1983. He also served on the board of directors of Beneficial Corporation and Fidelity Union Trust Corporation from 1977 to 1982. Mr. Quackenbush taught insurance courses at the University of Colorado and testified before the United States Congress on pending insurance legislation and separately as a staff member of the Hoover Commission in 1954-1955. In addition, he published articles in numerous insurance industry publications.

On April 28, 1945, Mr. Quackenbush married Audrey Norina Gordon in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Paterson, New Jersey. The couple had three daughters: Susan Gordon, born on August 23, 1948, Kathleen Bette, born on April 19, 1952, and Lynn Audrey Bruno, born on November 24, 1953, all in Paterson, New Jersey. Mr. Quackenbush’s extensive civic activities include service as president of the New Jersey Junior Chamber of Commerce, Secretary of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, president of the New Jersey Jaycees, and several New Jersey municipal board positions in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, and, later, in Frelinghuysen Township, New Jersey. He was a member of Paterson’s St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, where he served as president of the church’s advisory council and as a vestryman. A Republican leaning toward independent in his politics, Mr. Quackenbush was a member of the Panther Valley Country Club from 1966 to 1997. He enjoyed skiing, home photography, carpentry, tennis, and sailing.

Mr. Quackenbush is survived by his wife, Audrey; daughters, Susan Gordon Martin, Kathleen Bette Sasso, who is a Friend of The Holland Society, and Lynn Audrey Bruno; a brother, Jack; and four grandchildren. Interment was private.

DeWitte Campbell Wyckoff

The Holland Society of New York recently learned of the death on April 5, 2005, of DeWitte Campbell (“Cam”) Wyckoff, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at the age of eighty-seven. Dr. Wyckoff was born in Genesco, New York, on January 4, 1918, the son of DeWitte B. Wyckoff and Christabel Ellen Campbell. He claimed descent from Pieter Claesen Wyckoff, who emigrated to New Netherland from Holland in 1637. Mr. Wyckoff had been a Member of The Holland Society since 1952.

Dr. Wyckoff has been called one of the most notable Christian educators of the twentieth-century and is best known for his contribution to Christian education curricula.
Mr. Voorhees is survived by his daughters: Richard Callan, born on October 31, 1969, in Biddeford, Maine, and John Joseph, born on March 8, 1972, in Augusta, Maine. Mr. Schermerhorn became deeply offended when, some years later, The Holland Society rejected his son Richard's membership application because he was adopted. Mr. Schermerhorn subsequently withdrew from active participation in the Society.

In 1992, the Schermerhorns moved to Florida and he assumed a new career as a substitute English teacher in Palm Beach high schools. A Congregationalist in his religion and a Republican in his politics, Mr. Schermerhorn was a member of the Princeton Terrace Club, Toastmasters International, New York Business Press Editors, and South Street Seaport Museum.

Mr. Schermerhorn is survived by his wife, Joan, sons, Richard and John, and a grandson, Richard Jr. Funeral arrangements were made by the Quattlebaum Funeral Home and burial was in the family plot in Pittsfield Cemetery, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on October 15, 2005.

Alan Manners Voorhees

Prominent transportation engineer, city planner and philanthropist Alan Manners Voorhees died on December 18, 2005, at a hotel he owned in Richmond, Virginia, at the age of eighty-three. A Life Member of The Holland Society of New York since 1945. Mr. Voorhees was born on December 17, 1922, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, the son of Ralph Whitacker Voorhees and Jane Drake Manners. He claimed descent from Steven Coerten, who came to being reclaimed in lower Manhattan, and developed satellite mapping capabilities. Mr. Voorhees sold his firm in 1967 and became dean of the College of Architecture, Art and Urban Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle in 1971. In 1979, following airline deregulation, he helped founded Atlantic Southeast Airlines which was later bought by Delta Air Lines.

Mr. Voorhees married Natalie Rotter in 1948. The couple had three children: two daughters, Nancy and Susan, and a son, Scott. Natalie predeceased her husband in 2000.

Mr. Voorhees had a distinguished record of philanthropic work. A member of the National Academy of Engineering, he endowed research centers at several universities. These included the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers, established in 1998, and the Voorhees Computing Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. He was also a major donor to Voorhees College, Denmark, South Carolina, an historically black school founded by an ancestor. In addition, he created the Voorhees Nature Preserve on the Rappahannock River in Virginia (729 acres in 1994 worth $2.69 million) and established the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, in honor of his mother. He also donated significant collections of antique maps to the Library of Congress and other institutions, and served as a trustee of the Virginia Historical Society.

Mr. Voorhees is survived by his daughters Nancy of Bethesda, Maryland, and Susan Hunt of McLean, Virginia, and son, Scott of London, England, as well as by six grandchildren.
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1677-1720

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