

# NEW YORK HISTORY

THE NEW YORK STATE  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
AND THE  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK—  
COLLEGE AT ONEONTA

SPRING  
2015

**96/2**

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# NEW YORK HISTORY

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We ask that authors submit articles electronically. Submissions as well as footnotes should be double-spaced. Provision and costs of images for articles are the responsibility of the author. *New York History* employs, with some modification, note forms suggested in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Submissions can be sent directly to NYSHA's Publications Department [publications@nysha.org](mailto:publications@nysha.org)

The journal will process submissions as quickly as possible, but three to six months should be allowed for a thorough reading. *New York History* does not pay for author's articles.

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Looking back over a long career of teaching, researching, and writing about New York State, Milton M. Klein recalled that one of his greatest joys was bringing “history to a wider audience.”<sup>1</sup> Klein was a regular contributor to *New York History*; it published some of his most significant works on the eighteenth century, including “New York Lawyers and the Coming of the American Revolution,” which won the New York State Historical Association’s Kerr Prize.<sup>2</sup> The Editors share Klein’s passion for expanding the public’s interest in the past, and they publish only scholarly essays that are accessible to anyone (from high school students to professional historians) with an interest in New York State’s history. *New York History* does not publish brief, uninformed and easily forgotten blog posts. Rather, it offers well-researched, scholarly essays that are accessible to anyone and that will, like Klein’s essays which appeared in its pages beginning in the late 1950s, withstand scholarly scrutiny and the test of time.

This issue of the journal offers readers four essays exploring unique aspects of New York State’s rich history. In the lead essay, “Roscoe Conkling’s Cotton Speculation,” Jeffrey D. Broxmeyer uncovers a group of New York politicians, manufacturers, and merchants who made a

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1. Milton M. Klein, “The Pleasures of Teaching and Writing History,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 52:3 (1995): 483–487.

2. See, Milton M. Klein, “New York Lawyers and the Coming of the American Revolution,” *New York History* 55 (1974): 383–408. The New York State Historical Association Awards the Kerr Prize to the best essay published in each volume of *New York History*.

See also, Milton M. Klein, “John Jay and the Revolution,” *New York History* 81 (January 2000): 19–30; Milton M. Klein, “An Experiment that Failed: General James Robertson and Civil Government in British New York, 1779–1783,” *New York History* 61 (July 1980): 229–254; Milton M. Klein, “Origins of the Bill of Rights in Colonial New York,” *New York History* 72 (October 1991): 388–405. Milton M. Klein, “Why did the British Fail to Win the Hearts and Minds of New Yorkers,” *New York History* 64 (October 1983): 357–375; Milton M. Klein, “Clio Ascendant: The Writing of American History in the Eighteenth Century,” *New York History* 68 (January 1987): 4–26; Milton M. Klein, “New York in the American Colonies: A New Look,” *New York History* 53 (April 1972): 132–146; Milton M. Klein, “From Community to Status: The Development of the Legal Profession in Colonial New York,” *New York History* 60 (1979): 133–156; Milton M. Klein, “Democracy and Politics in Colonial New York,” *New York History* 40 (July 1959): 221–246.

good deal of money in the cotton market during the American Civil War. Before 1860, the American South produced over seventy-five percent of the world's cotton supply, but the war disrupted production, leaving merchants and manufacturers, from New York to England, desperate for new suppliers. At the heart of Broxmeyer's essay is an examination of newly discovered evidence—primarily tax records—that details how much money clever and well-connected politicians, with the blessing of President Abraham Lincoln, made during the war. Jeffrey A. Marx's essay, "Philadelphia Comes to New York," explores the history of cream cheese. In the nineteenth century, New York became a leader in the dairy industry, and this journal has published a number of articles on the history of milk and dairy products. But Marx's essay is the first to examine the development of the cream cheese market and the methods manufacturers used to promote this product. Both essays enhance our understanding of New York's place in America's burgeoning economy in the late nineteenth century.

In "The Heiress Victoria Gone with Her Father's Coachman," Carolee Klimchuck narrates the captivating tale of Victoria Morosini, the Gilded Age heiress who scandalized the country when she eloped with her family's coachman. Klimchuck does not simply spin a good yarn. She illustrates the ways in which Morosini's tale intersected with the rise of a "new journalism," which peddled scandalous events and dramatic storylines to eager audiences of readers. In our celebrity- and scandal-obsessed contemporary society, Klimchuck provides an illuminating reminder that journalistic excess has a long history. In his essay, Gregory J. Shibley reveals a lesser known, but equally significant aspect of the history of journalism. In "The Business Saga of New York's *Syrian World*, 1926–1935," Shibley details the fascinating and troubled history of a significant English-language periodical aimed at an Arab-American readership. Although the newspaper did not survive beyond a decade, Shibley analyzes how its publishers sought to navigate the turbulent waters of assimilation, acculturation, and generational difference among immigrant communities in the 1920s and '30s.

The Editors continue their commitment to keeping *New York History's* readers abreast of some of the most interesting and engaging new publications about the state. In this issue, we offer a book review essay and four book reviews. The review essay compares two recent books on the War of 1812. Reviewers critique a book on the contest between Native Americans

and Europeans in early America, another on new archeological research at the site of Fort William Henry on Lake George, an edited volume of documents by and related to Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, as well as a recent book on a pair of “dazzling and flamboyant” sisters, Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin.

Many individuals helped make this issue possible. Beginning in 2012, *New York History* has been a collaborative effort between the staff of the New York State Historical Society and the Editors from the Department of History at the State University of New York at Oneonta. Working behind the scenes, undergraduate students—who serve as Research Assistants—play a crucial role in the publication of every issue. This year, Sam Benedict, Cody Martel, Natalie Newton, Jerrad Pacatte, Hunter Reed, Alexandria Robison, and Zachary Utter served as Research Assistants. We thank them for their hard work and their commitment to *New York History*. We also thank those subscribers who responded to our recent announcements. Your words of encouragement and criticism are helping us produce better issues. If you have questions about the contents of these pages, please contact us by electronic mail at [publications@nysha.org](mailto:publications@nysha.org).