

October 2022



"It's *your* New York!"

# *The Rondout Reader*

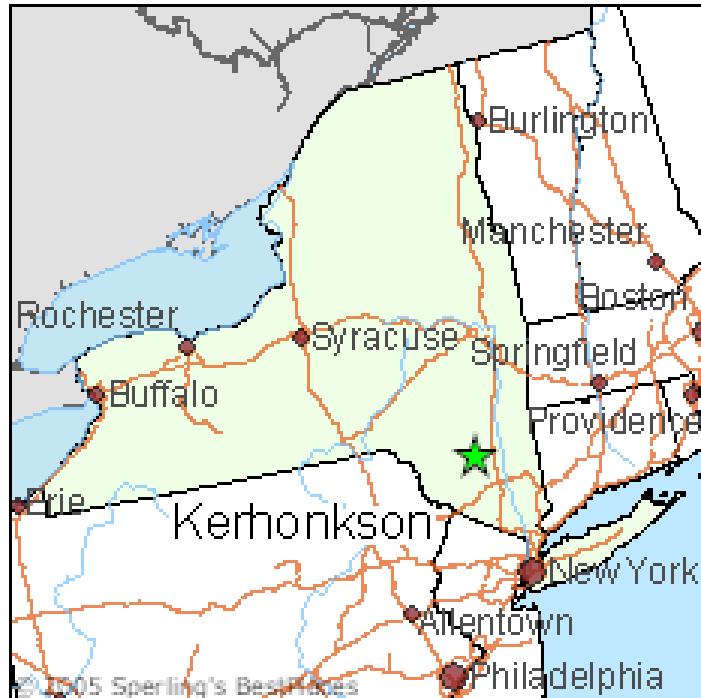
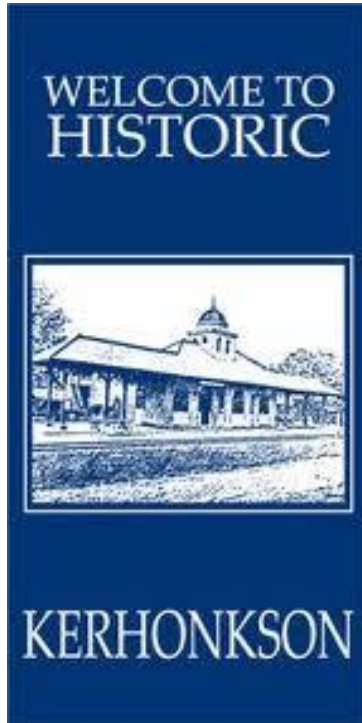
## **The New York Gnome**



**AN INDELIBLE SCRAPBOOK**

by Kevin Ahearn

## New York



**Gnome:** One of a fabled race of dwarflike creatures who live underground and guard treasure hoards.

*For Candice Kimmel*

Note: "**The New York GNOME**" is pure fantasy.  
All references to actual persons, alive or dead,  
made for a good story.

**The RONDOUT READER** is posted monthly by WordPress. The stories are free and always will be. Feedback is encouraged. Feel free to forward and to post links.

# Prologue



Gnomes *are* real. Hopefully they always will be.



But unlike 'Bigfoot', 'Yeti', and 'space aliens', there are no dedicated cryptozoologists, exobiologists and wannabe-scientists scouring the globe seeking irrefutable evidence that these magical beings exist.

Gnomes treasure natural life and serve as ideal garden adornments. Are they all lifeless stone statues? An 'Unidentified Garden Object' (UGO) sighting is never acknowledged and no zealous investigators will rush to the scene to take photos, soil samples and testimony.

Because there's no diehard group of 'believers', no grand demand for Gnomes to be recognized as enduring supernatural creatures.

Therein lies the rub: before there can be Gnomes, there must be *treasure*.



No treasure, no Gnomes. And only on land as Gnomes are not aquatic.

Ornate chests overflowing with gold and silver and gems hidden deep? A priceless trove of historical documents guarded by Gnomes?

Only in legend and myth, fantasy and lore, movies and cartoons, books and video games.

And of course, in New York...

# Book 1



**“The shot heard round the world”**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

# One



**“Excelsior”**  
New York State Motto

In the summer of 1777, New York City was ablaze, courtesy of the British redcoats.



One hundred miles north, New York's first capital was Kingston, an agricultural and transportation hub where the Rondout Creek joined the Hudson.



*"The British are coming! The British are coming!"*



*“Kingston is a nursery for almost every villain in the country!”*

In revenge, the Redcoats began setting Kingston afire. But what of the State government? If captured by the British, New York would never become a state. What could the patriots do? To flee to Connecticut would make them 'a government in exile'; New Yorkers were having none of that.

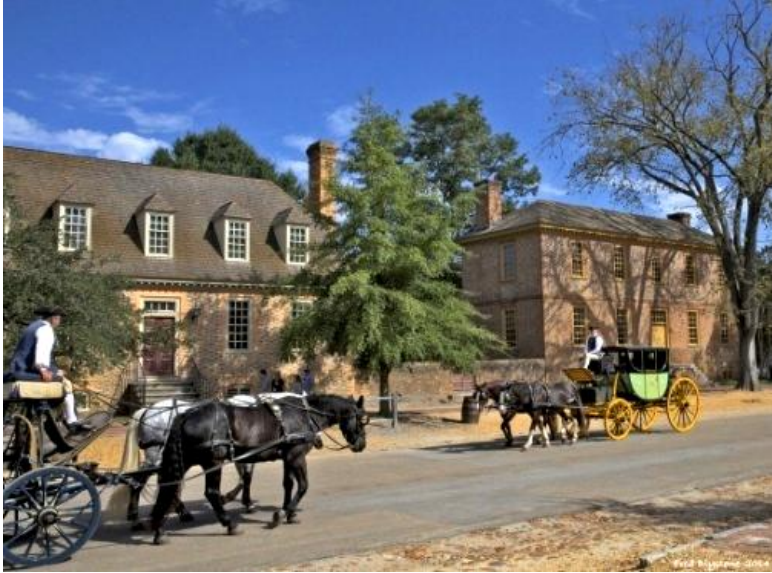


Relocate the capital in Albany? British troops were massing in Saratoga. Albany could fall next. Most important were the irreplaceable *documents*, the *NY Constitution* and the collection of land deeds and Indian treaties that certified New York as a state.

With fires burning all around, a lone wagon pulled up in front of the Senate House, soon to be put to the torch.

History had come to a fork in the road; New Yorkers were going to take it!





*"With you rides the future! Whosoever bears this  
'Trunk of Deeds' owns New York State."*

The wooden box had a leather and canvas wrap, brass tacks and a lockplate. Barely two feet long, half a foot wide and five inches high, the document chest was a veritable treasure.



*"The quill-pushers, the kernel-counters,  
and their bales of paperwork can wait.  
The State itself must be saved first."*

*"But, sir, you know what  
they say about all  
the eggs in one basket."*

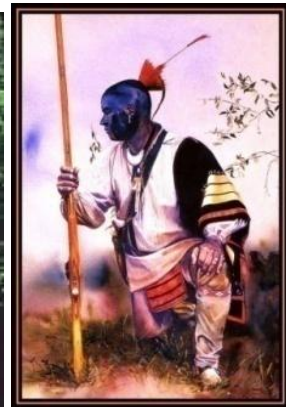
*"Don't tell me you believe in  
Gnomes?"*

*"Ha! Better Gnomes than in  
an English basket!"*



The pair concealed the 'Trunk of Deeds' under bags of corn. Kingston burning at their backs, they headed southwest.

Twenty-five miles along the Rondout could be dangerous in springtime with the current high and fast and over the berme, but in late summer with the water low, praise God, there were no redcoats or Esopus warriors on the trail.



At last they came to Kerhonkson, a hopeful hamlet settled by the Dutch more than a century before.

A trio of patriots met the wagon at the shaky bridge over the Rondout; from there to a stone house in the woods.



*"Here? We should've just buried the trunk and saved ourselves the trip."*

*"For how long?"*

*"Like a coffin? The honor of the State in a grave?"*

*"A fortnight or forever! Because if we don't beat the British, the 'Trunk of Deeds' will be worthless."*

They carried the precious cargo into the basement. With pikes they pried up the floor of bluestone slabs. Below was a prepared cavity. They positioned the trunk carefully, then slid back the slabs. Concealed and protected, the treasure was safe.



Both would fight through the Revolution, become New Yorkers, and raise families, the first *American* generation.



Within days of the Kerhonkson mission, a British Army surrendered at Saratoga. Albany was no longer threatened. The State government would be on the move again, but when the patriots went to retrieve 'The Trunk of Deeds' from under the bluestone slabs, the New York treasure had disappeared.

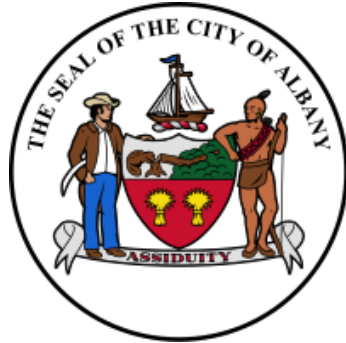
Despite an extensive search, the chest and its contents would be lost for centuries.

The tide had turned against Great Britain; the Colonists never let up. On October, 19, 1781, General Cornwallis formally surrendered 8,000 British soldiers and seamen to a French and American force at Yorktown, Virginia. At long last and at great cost, the United States was a free country, and New York, an American state.

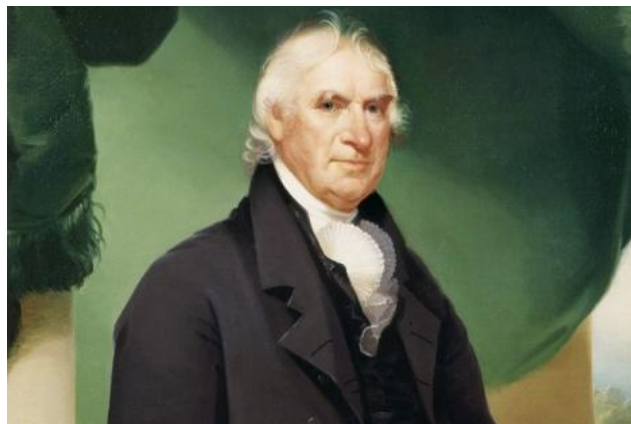


What now?

In 1781, the legislature met for the first time in Albany's *Stadt Huis* (Town Hall). The fighting against the Dutch, the Indians, and finally the British was over; New York's destiny was at hand.



By the 15th of October, the leaves had just begun to turn in the Albany autumn. Governor George Clinton had come to his first floor office early for a cup of tea, when suddenly... ***a noise from nowhere!***



***"Who goes there?"***

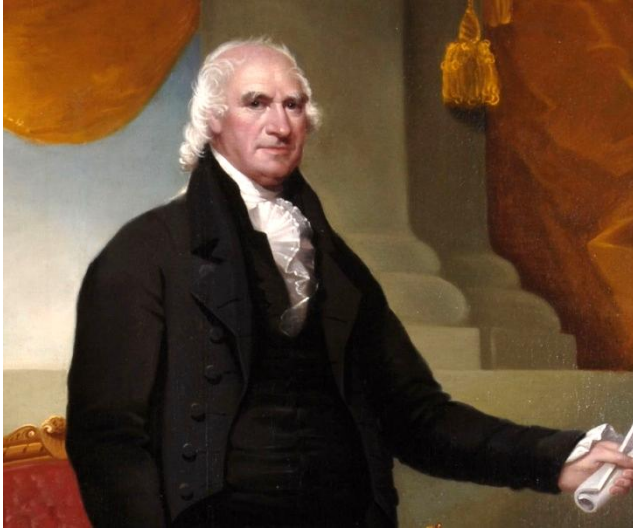


*"Look down to look up, Guv-nerr!  
I am the king who owns New York State."*

# Two



***“Welcome gnome!”***



*"M-My God! "You're..."      "Calm down, please. I am not your God!  
I'm a Gnome and will not hurt you in any way.  
Believe your eyes. Listen to your ears. You  
are the leader of this new state. Has New  
York no protocol for visiting royalty?"*

Revolutionary War general, statesman and lawyer, George Clinton's political reflexes kicked in. He stood and bowed his head.

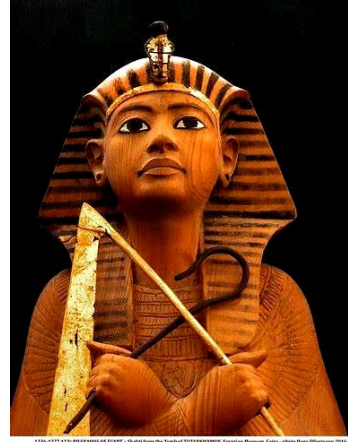
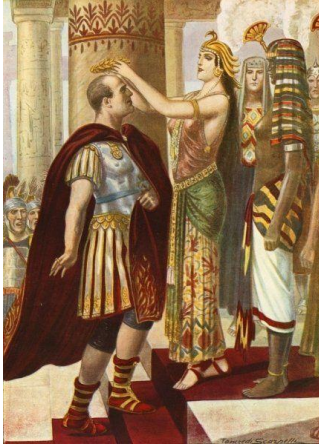
*"Your Majesty."*

*"As I helped you win the war and  
saved your life, that's more like it."*

*"You did what?"*







The king possessed the wisdom of a thousand ages, and the patience it encouraged. Gnomes first appeared just after us. Man's inhumanity to man brought forth avarice and greed, Caesars and pharaohs, emperors and queens hoarding priceless objects, wizards conjuring up Gnomes to keep treasures hidden forever.



The Gnome is the hope that there will always be treasure. That if humanity ever looked out upon the land and failed to see treasure all around, then there would be no more Gnomes. And not much of humanity either.



*"My magic cannot harm, but can be helpful.  
Scores of enemy shots 'diverted', many lives saved.  
You remember that rifleball that zinged past your ear?"*

At the Battle of White Plains, a shot had missed General Clinton by inches.

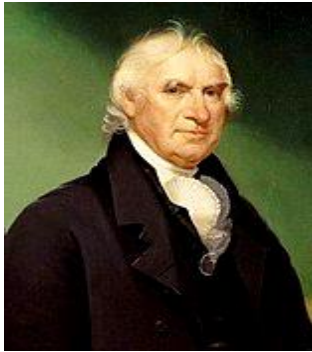


*"You're a Gnome who...why?"*

*"Because if you had lost, they'd be no New York and the 'Trunk of Deeds' would have been no treasure."*

*"You stole it!"*

*"No. A Gnome is never a thief. New York arrogance and carelessness stored its historic soul like a cargo of cabbages. I moved the treasure to a more secure location."*



"Where?"      *"In my underground kingdom, where it will be for eternity, far out of reach of your shovel diggers."*

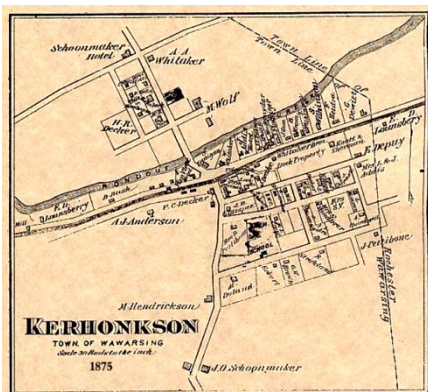


The Gnome had no idea that time would prove him wrong.

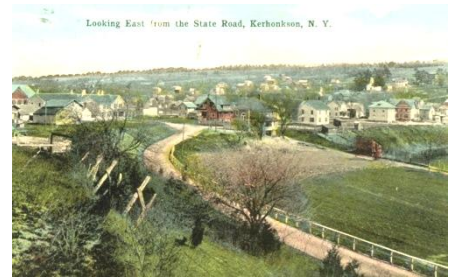
*"What is it you want, Your Majesty?"*

*"As I own New York, only the best for my 'Royal Birthplace', Kerhonkson."*

"Kerhonkson?"



Formerly 'Middleport', in 1665, the land, including Kerhonkson Kill, was bought from the Esopus Indians for 40 blankets, 20 pounds of gunpowder, 20 knives, and 12 lead bars -- only forty years after Peter Minuet had purchased Manhattan for \$24 in trinkets, a clear indication that New York property values were on the rise.

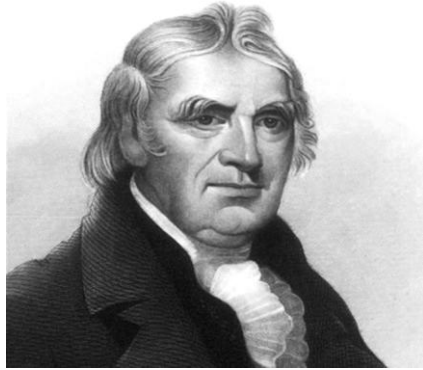


The farming community officially became a town in 1703 and prospered in the fertile Rondout Valley basin. Small mills of all varieties sprang up on the nearby streams. The road to Kingston following the 'Crick, the export link to the Hudson, was often referred to as 'The King's Highway.'



*"And its dividing waterway, the Regal Rondout Creek. Forever may the air be clean, the land rich and the water pure."*

'Rondout' (*Ron doubt*, not *Round out*) comes from the Dutch adjective *ronduyt* meaning 'positively'. 'Fort Rondout' was erected by the Dutch near the mouth of the Hudson River in 1666. More than 60 miles long, the 'crick' rises on Rocky Mountain in the eastern Catskills, flows south into the valley through Kerhonkson between the Catskills and the Shawangunk Ridge, where it goes over the High Falls and finally out to the Hudson at Kingston.

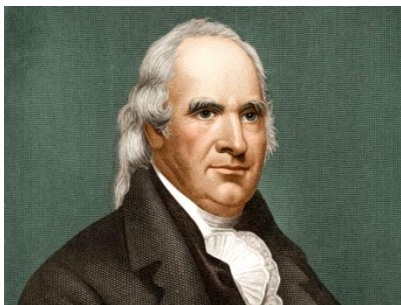


*"Your Majesty, President George Washington himself has named New York 'The Empire State'. The best I can do for Kerhonkson would be to leave the town alone. That's the New York Way. Can't have the State playing favorites."*

*"My New York, my 'Empire State'!  
You are no more than an elected caretaker."*

The Governor slumped back. This magical king held the 'Trunk of Deeds'! Most of the documents had been redrawn, but not every original signee had survived the war. New York State was a forgery, and without the Dutch and English deeds, a fraud!

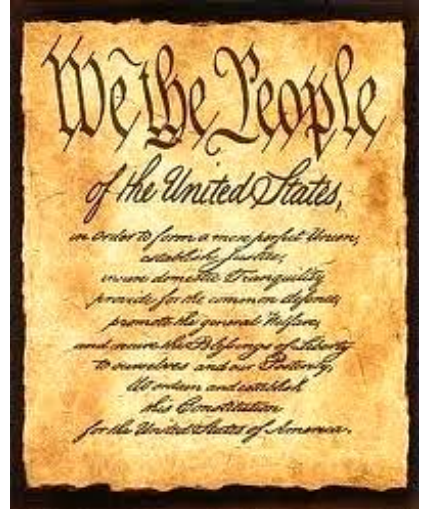
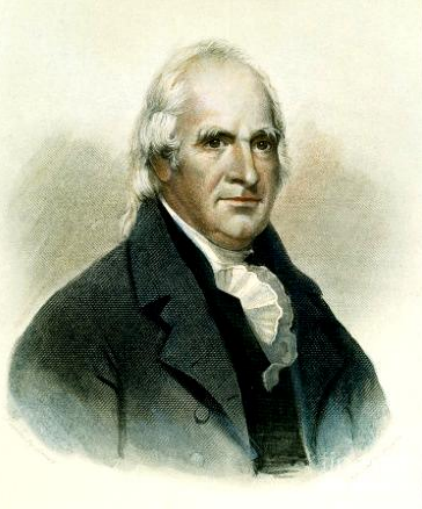
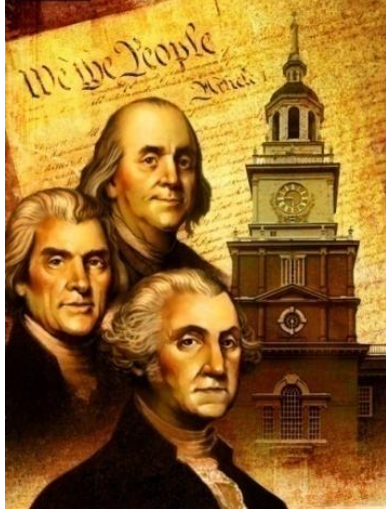
Clinton had little choice. He raised his teacup.



*"To Kerhonkson!"*

*"Positively!"*

The Gnome and the Governor met infrequently to talk of many things. The State 'caretaker' would be reelected again and again, earning the title 'Father of New York State'. In 1791, Clinton felt privileged to have the counsel of a king.

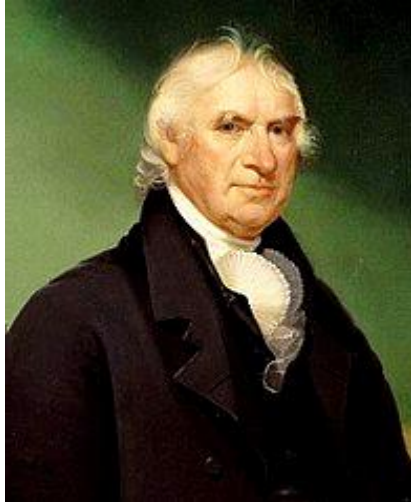


*"Your Majesty, as you are more than familiar with American documents, I present our Constitution."*

The Gnome could read and remember instantly, and knew a score of languages, half a dozen already dead. How long would this *English* last?



*"The makings of your America?  
Then why are there still  
slaves in my New York?"*

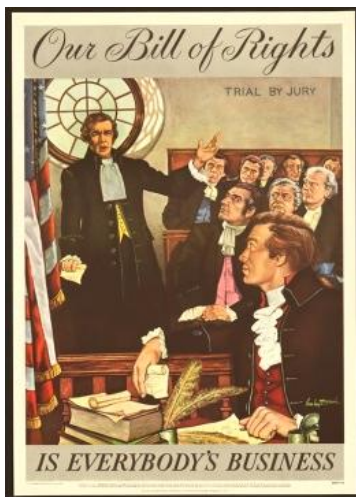


*"We're...still working on that, Your Majesty! Coloreds brought here from Africa aren't..."*

*"Aren't what? Every Gnome in my kingdom is equally endowed with spirit-- to be who he or she yearns to become. Not yet in New York!"*

*'We are taking steps...'*

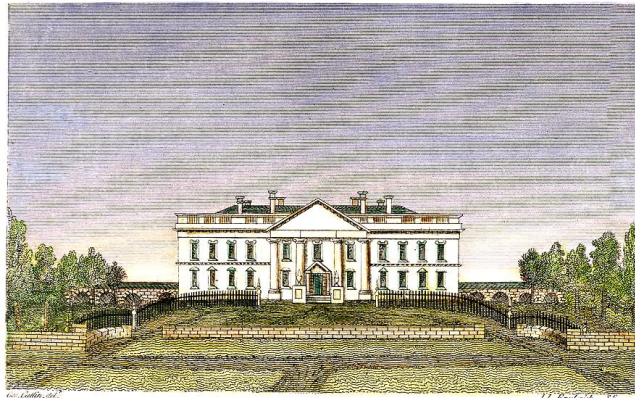
Clinton brought forth another parchment, beautifully inked.



*"Rights! Expect no royal indulgence for your pretty words. Nor your 'treasure' until every New Yorker is free!"*

In 1795, Clinton was elected for the seventh time, but as elections were different back in the day, the governor was also elected Vice

President, and chose the country over the State. He and his family moved to Washington DC, not the last time a NY governor would make the trip.



A Front View of the  
PRESIDENT'S HOUSE *Washington.*

On his final day in office, the departing governor began a New York tradition that would last for centuries; meeting alone with his successor "to talk of many things. cabbages and kings."





# Three



*“No blessing, no good, can follow in the path trodden by slavery.”*



How difficult would it be for a 'Founding Father' to get along with a Gnome?

Governor John Jay had served as president of the Continental Congress, and would later become the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. A politician, diplomat, and lawyer, he helped negotiate the end of the Revolutionary War,

So when the magical monarch appeared...



*"Your Majesty."*

*"When will New York get its treasure back?"*



*"Good. We're going to get along just fine, Guv-nerr."*

*"Impatience is the bane of leadership. Let New York earn its legitimacy."*

Governor Jay took that as a challenge. In 1799, he signed "An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery" which effectively ended slavery in New York State by July 4, 1827.



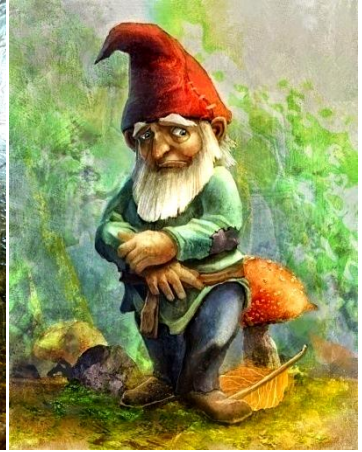
*"You call this hemp paper a law? Will you be the one to tell New York children born into slavery that they will have to wait till they've grown up to be free?"*

On Jay's last day in office, there was no need to meet with the new incoming Governor 'to talk of many things'; George Clinton returned for his seventh term.



*"Welcome back, Guv-nerr!"*

Royal joy would be shortlived. Clinton served until 1804 and then campaign for the Presidential nomination he'd fail to get. Having known the Governor for a quarter of a century, the Gnome would be equally disappointed.



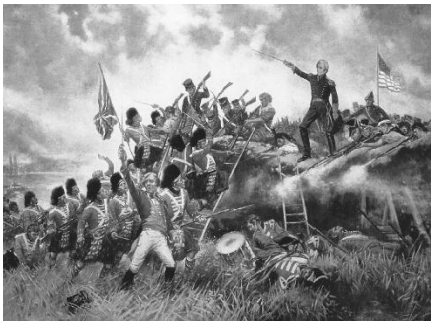
His longtime friend never to return, the royal gnome took time to contemplate his surface kingdom.

*“This strange and constantly conflicted land!  
Will this ‘New York’ ever be worth its  
treasured ‘Trunk of Deeds’?”*



Governor Morgan Lewis came and went and got a county named after him.

Daniel D. Tompkins was elected governor four times. In 1812, he announced...



*"We're at war with the British!"*



*"Again? The stupidest, costliest waste of blood and treasure!  
Couldn't you get it right the first time?"*



Governor Tompkins defended New York's western and northern borders throughout the war. After it was won, once again, New York State had served as a stepping stone to Washington. Tompkins resigned his governorship to become vice president under James Monroe.



John Tayler was acting governor for four months and the king met with him only once. To the Gnome's surprise, the next Governor would almost be family.

De Witt Clinton was once the private secretary to his uncle, George Clinton. And like the first Governor, a man of vision.

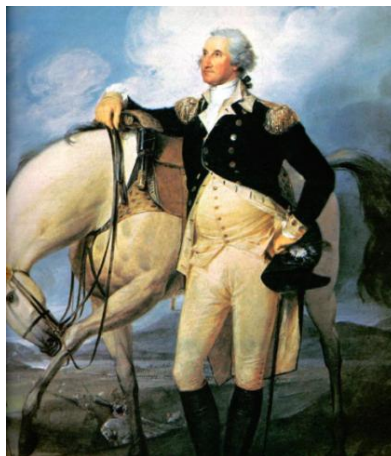


*"Your Majesty, I am going to build a grand canal connecting Lake Erie to the Hudson River and creating a profitable maritime route from New York Harbor to the country's interior."*

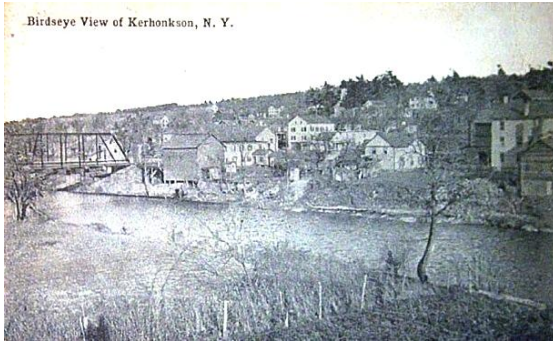


*"A big ditch. And when progress leaves your brainchild in the dust, will there be an ugly scar across New York?"*

An engineering marvel, the Erie Canal would be a monumental success and lead to the digging of more canals, including through 'The Royal Birthplace'.

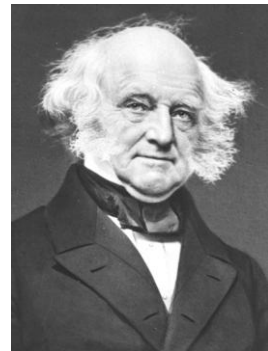


On November 15th, 1782, en route to Kingston from Port Jervis, George Washington spent the night in Kerhonkson. The town has been sleeping ever since.



Kerhonkson never developed any true industrial center; none of the town's streams supplied enough water necessary for a large mill. The community relied upon the land. Saw mills, hoop shops and gristmills sprang up on the small streams from the mountains which provided only seasonable energy. Farming remained king.

But change was in the wind and would soon be on the road.

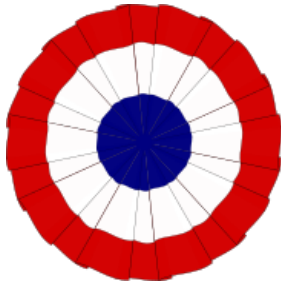


Joseph C. Yates, Nathaniel Pitcher, and Martin Van Buren, portraits in the Hall of Governors in the Capital. Van Buren was nicknamed "Old Kinderhook," by his supporters; it caught on when shortened to 'Okay.'



*"I prefer 'Positively'.*





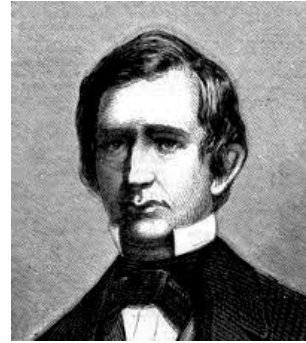
Enos T. Throop, of the **Democratic-Republican Party** passed laws to build the state's first insane asylum, ended imprisonment for debtors, and led New York's response to a cholera outbreak.



*"Be careful, Guv-nerr, because you know what they say, 'Only loons talk to Gnomes'."*

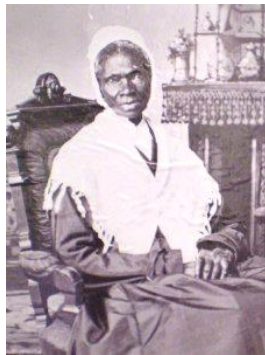


The highest peak in the Adirondacks is named for Governor William L. Marcy who created the State Geological Survey, which became the New York State Museum.



William H. Seward became famous after being Governor. In 1867, he would champion the purchase of Alaska from Russia. 'Seward's Folly' would later become America's 49th state.

While in the State Capital, he listened to the Gnome about slaves that had escaped to New York.



*"You've got to take a stand, Guv-nerr. Tell the whole country how the 'Empire State' feels about freedom!"*

Seward agreed, refusing to return fugitive slaves to the South.



Governor William C. Bouck had once ridden a white horse to pay Erie Canal workers.

The Gnome never needed one; His Majesty preferred to fly.



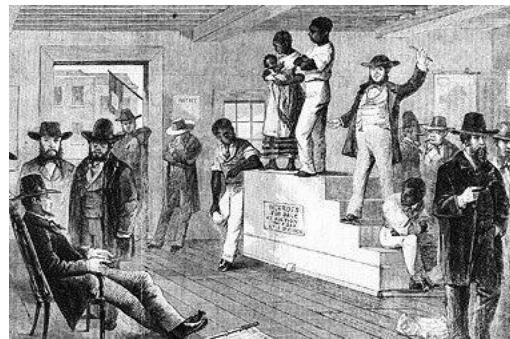
Buoyed by 'The Trunk of Deeds', the king explored this 'new state' from the fabulous waterfall at the top to the big city growing at the mouth of the great river, from the shores of the big lakes to the peaks of its mountain chain. The most beautiful sight came when the leaves changed color in the Rondout Valley.



Then deep underground...

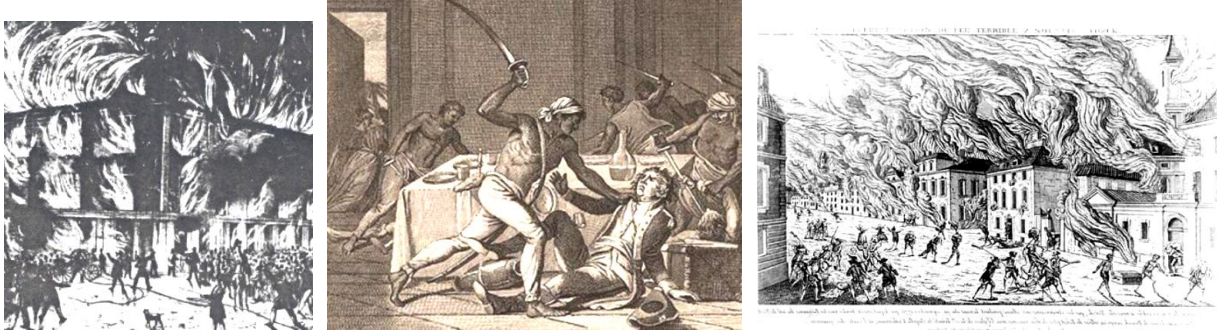


Color in his New York troubled him. In the beginning, white people sought to drive out the red people who'd been here first. Then the whites fought the foreign whites to secure their state for themselves. Is this the way New York would work?



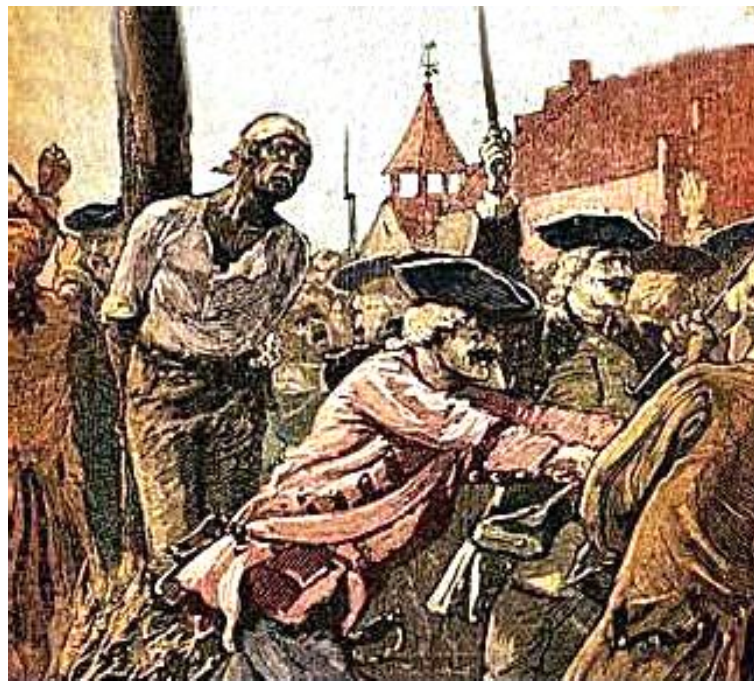
In no way could he divine *blackness*. Why were these black people brought to New York in chains, then bought and sold like farm animals? Blacks were human beings like other New Yorkers, weren't they?

Slavery had begun in the 'New World' 150 years before the signing of the *Declaration of Independence*. The whites needed forced labor to work their farms. Didn't they know the cursed seed they were planting?



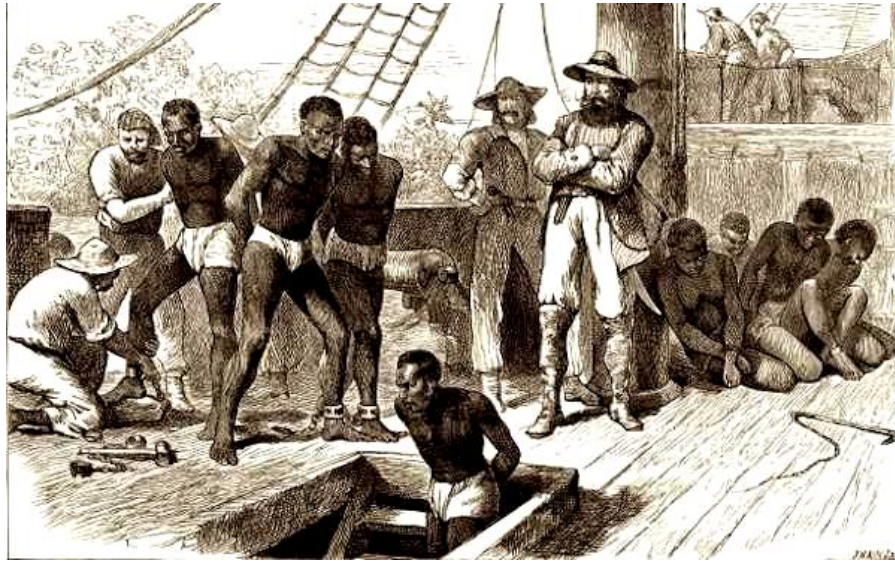
In 1712, twenty-three slaves in New York City had risen up against their owners, killing nine whites. *Seventy* blacks were arrested and jailed. Six committed suicide. The rest were put on trial, and twenty-one convicted.

Not put in cages or shot or hanged, the rebellious slaves were burned.



White fear ruled the 'New World'. No longer would blacks be allowed to gather in groups of more than three. Other crimes, such as property damage, rape, and conspiracy to kill, were made punishable by death. Slavery, by law, would go on. Whites who decided to free their slaves were required to pay a tax of £200, a price much higher than the price of a slave.

Slavery was vital in early New York, part of Dutch colonial policy, but the British used the colony as a *market* for slaves, urging governors, councilors, and customs officials "to promote the importation of slaves by every possible means."



The steady flow of slaves allowed New York to stabilize and, by 1640, to expand its agricultural output. 'Negro' labor made farming attractive and profitable, especially in the Rondout Valley, where there were too few free white workers.



The Negroes revolted again in 1741, setting fires in Manhattan. Rumors spread of a supposedly growing 'conspiracy' of poor whites and blacks to burn the city, kill the white men, take the white women for themselves, and elect a new king and governor.

Two slaves were burned at the stake. Trials and executions followed through the summer. At the height of the hysteria, nearly half the city's male slaves over the age of 16 were in jail. Convicted New York 'conspirators' were hanged or burned, their corpses left to rot in public. Others were deported to Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the Madeiras.



Leading up to the Revolution, black slaves accounted for more than 35 percent of the total immigration through New York City. Even after New York became part of the United States, 'Where all men were created equal'!



[Shameless plug]

About the Author

[americananthologies.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/superhero-story.pdf](http://americananthologies.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/superhero-story.pdf)

*I was a*  
**TOP SECRET** *Superhero!*



**Discovering** *America*

by Kevin Ahearn



# Four



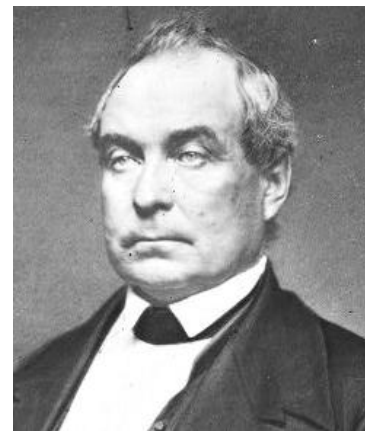
*"Willing and able"*



Albany in 1844 – Silas Wright, Jr. born in Massachusetts and raised in Vermont. Unlike other previous governors, he declined the vice presidential nomination to run for NY office.



*"Congratulations, Guv-nerr! Wherever you came from, you've become a New Yorker!"*



*"The office should seek the man, not man the office."*



Elected in 1848, John Young only served two years. Not soon enough, New York would have the once-unthinkable: women voters!



*"Oh, Guv-nerr! All ladies of my kingdom have been voting since before you were born!"*



*"The Erie Canal will expand, Your Majesty, but the United States should not expand through war!"*

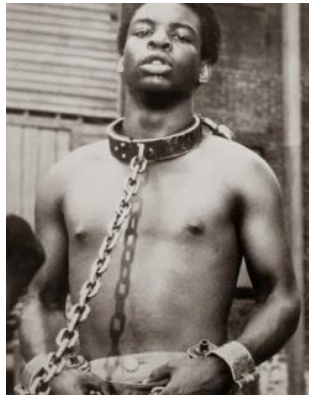
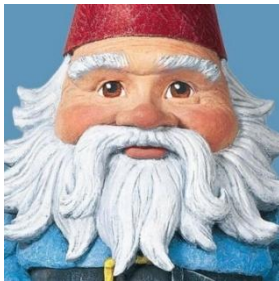


*"Another war? This time for land and power. You New Yorkers, you Americans, can't get enough!"*



The United States and Mexico fought for two years. America won and took half of Mexico's territory, establishing itself as a continental power.

Serving New York, Governor Hamilton Fish began a family tradition that would have his son, grandson, and great-grandson becoming State Congressmen.



*“More land, more people, more slaves? So that’s why America fought Mexico?”*

*“No! No slaves in the newly won territories, including California and New Mexico!”*



Governor Washington Hunt, in addition to trying to further expand the Erie Canal, saw the future of New York, not just in its waterways, but in its *roads*.

And the flood of immigrants...



The 'Empire State' was growing and growing!

In his first term, as Governor Horatio Seymour...



*"I will not vote for Prohibition in New York. Nor will I support anti-immigrant 'nativism' which would give privileges to people born here and limit the opportunities of newcomers."*

*"Good for you, Guv-nerr! Every New Yorker, whether here since before the Revolution or just off the boat, must have equal rights and be able to drink to it!"*

In 1854, Myron H. Clark won the election by 309 votes.



*"Guv-nerr, you don't know what you're doing!"*



*"New York will have Prohibition!"*

For eight months until overturned by the Court of Appeals. Clark was quickly voted out. The Gnome was happy to see him go.



A cavalry lieutenant in the War of 1812, John A. King took up the fight for the improvement of schools and voting rights for black New Yorkers.



*"Color must never decide opportunities!  
Not creed or origins either."*

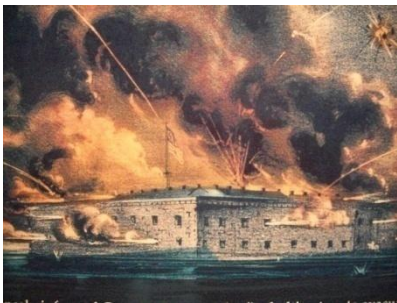
Unfortunately, not all of America felt that way.



Edwin D. Morgan was New York's first 'businessman' Governor who reduced the state debt and enhanced the effectiveness of prisons, insurance companies, and charities.

But a far greater crisis had engulfed the United States.

On April 12th, 1861...

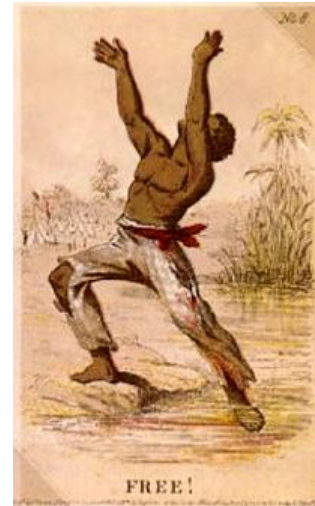
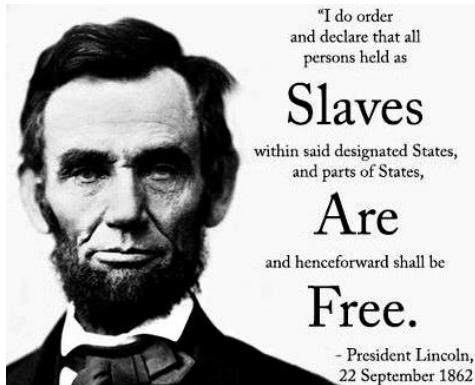


*"America is again at war, Your Majesty!  
This time against ourselves."*



*"Had to be! You patriotic Americans and your precious beliefs. Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the sacred Bill of Rights, yet you permitted slavery in your free country for more than four generations. Finally, the hypocrisy will end or your states will never be united!"*

For the Civil War effort, Morgan helped raise and equip over 200,000 Union troops and served as Major General of volunteers and Commander of the Department of New York.



Horatio Seymour was back as Governor, opposing the federal draft to raise a Civil War army and challenging the constitutionality of the *Emancipation Proclamation*.



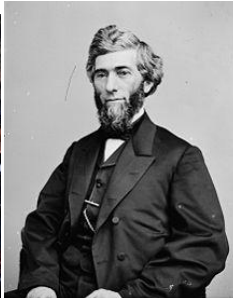
*"You dare question the national freedoms guaranteed in writing to every American! This war is not an ending, but the beginning of the overdue forging of the United States.*

*"Get out of New York and never come back!"*





620,000 Dead! Slavery Abolished!



Finally the Civil War ended. The son of a farmer, Governor Reuben E. Fenton became the 'Soldier's Friend', advocating for the welfare of soldiers and authorized relief measures to benefit veterans.



*"Positively, Guv-nerr! But if you truly want to help your heroes, stop allowing New York to be pulled into these damn wars!"*



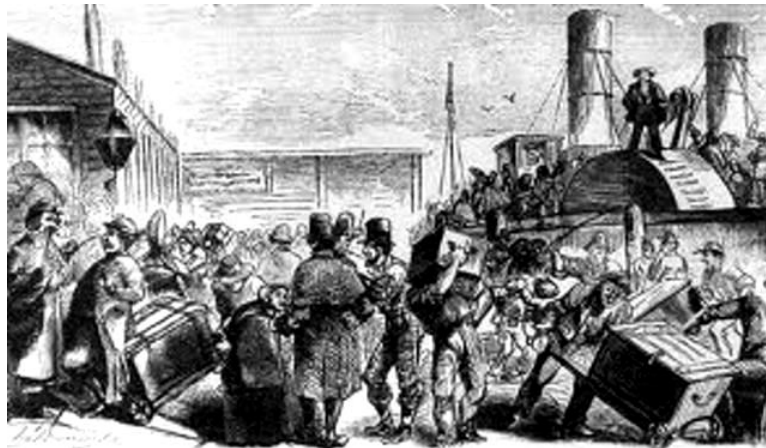
In 1870, in Kingston, the first capital, a statue of Governor Clinton was unveiled. The Gnome was pleased; 'The Father of New York State' deserved his likeness to be known forever.

But Governor after Governor after Governor, State leadership had become a temporary political exercise. Clinton's successors were more like 'errant sons' who served two or three years until somebody else took over. Would New York ever fully define itself?



The Gnome had always been king and always would be. His kingdom was what it had been, stable and content with no need for expansion. But New York!

In the beginning, there had been more Indians and slaves than patriots. Slavery had finally been abolished and the Indians driven from their lands opening the way for wave after wave, *millions* upon *millions* of 'new' New Yorkers.

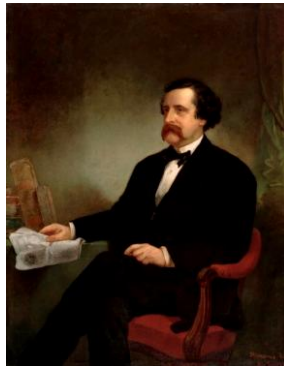


How could the State possibly govern them all?



The Government grew with the population. Designed by five architects and constructed by hand over 25 years costing \$25,000,000, the new Capital mansion, built at the crest of Albany's State Street, was a conglomeration of Gothic Revival,

Romanesque and Moorish influences with three regal staircases and a Senate Chamber adorned with 23-carat gold leaf, Italian marble, and massive fireplaces.



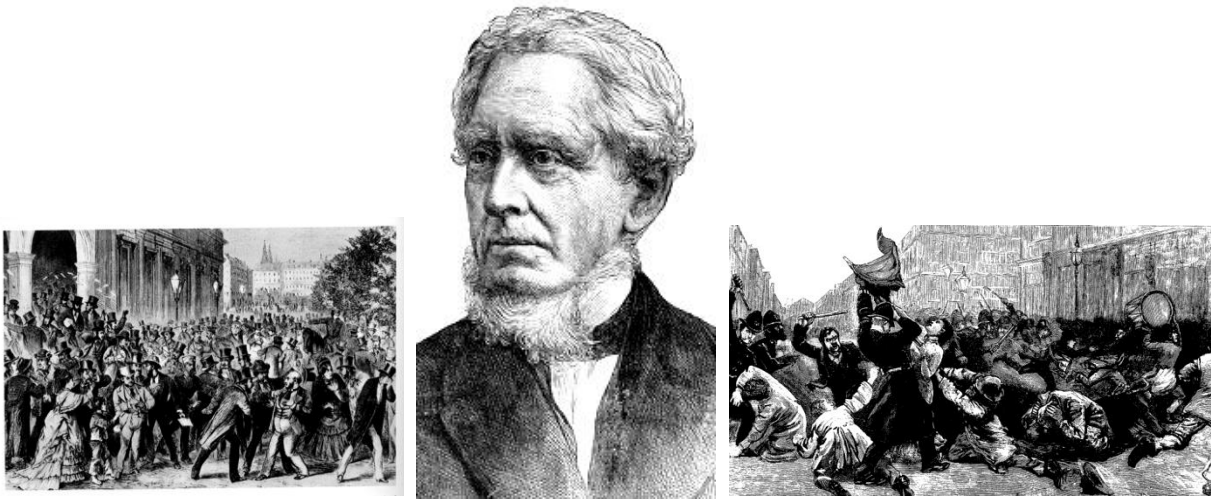
In 1869 John T. Hoffman, former mayor of New York City, moved in. usually a good place to start. Hoffman help create the American Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but the city was rife with political corruption.



*"Your new office says much about you and the State, Guv-nerr! You've become the leader not of the people, but of 'the party' that will do anything to keep its power. And if the party is rotten, you'll be thought of as the same, and the people will rid themselves of you."*

*"Your Majesty, my association with 'Boss' Tweed of the Tammany Hall political machine is not what the what the people perceive it to be!"*

New Yorkers' 'perception' soon drove Hoffman out of office.



Governor John Adams Dix got a *new* New York problem in 1873: the 'Long Depression', a worldwide economic recession, which lasted a generation in Europe and the United States, following strong economic growth during the Second Industrial Revolution in the decade after the American Civil War.



*"Money, money, money! Whether one is rich or poor, it's good to have it! For an honest day's work. New Yorkers need to be doing!"*

*"Confidence, courage, Your Majesty. New York, America will recover!"*

*"I have no doubt, Guv-nerr. But what actions will the State take to prevent the next 'depression'?"*



Samuel J. Tilden was a much-needed reformer who attacked corruption including those politicians who defrauded the state through mismanagements of its canals.

On his last day in office, after meeting alone with his successor, Governor Tilden was questioned by the growing press.



*"We talked of many things.  
Of cabbages and kings."*

Lucius Robinson had been known as a "guardian of the economy" when he served in the State Assembly. As governor, Robinson eased the tax burden, and paid off the general debt by 1878.



*"Never forget, Guv-nerr. That the hard work,  
brave deeds and sacrifice that created  
New York can never be repaid."*



Like so many Governors, Alonzo B. Cornell was a rich man's son. An able administrator, he modernized state finances and created the state board of health and railroad commission. He also upgraded the National Guard.



*"To protect New York from whom?  
Unruly New Yorkers?"*



*"Grover Cleveland drunk is a more valuable asset to this country than the whole batch of the rest of our public men sober."*

*"Though the people support the government; the government should not support the people."*

The Gnome and the Governor never shared a drink.

Not that they shouldn't have.

Blunt and honest, Stephen Grover Cleveland championed the public interest and favored a strong civil service law over patronage. A good start, but Cleveland resigned after winning the presidential election of 1884.

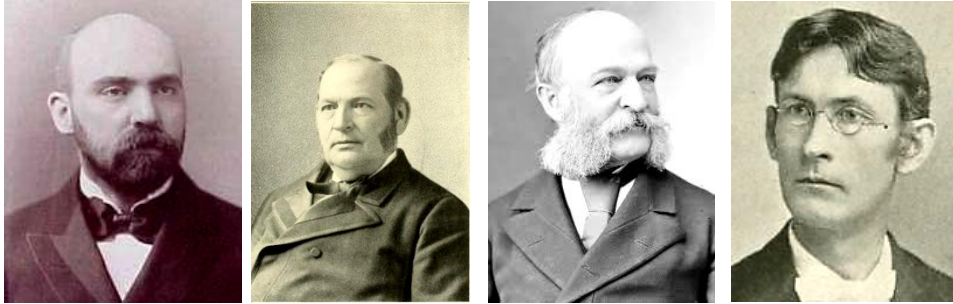
New York to Washington was becoming a well-traveled political route.

**1886**

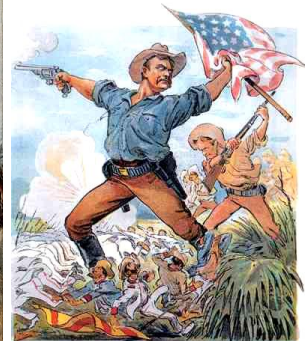


*"Positively! New York has a rightful queen!"*





Governors David B. Hill, Roswell P. Flower, Levi P. Morton, and Frank S. Black all talked 'of cabbages and kings', but there was far from Wonderland on the US horizon.



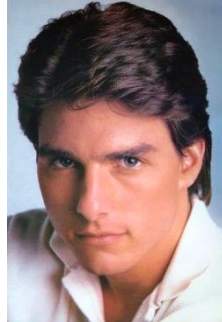
*"Against Spain?  
How many more of my subjects will war kill?"*

[A second shameless plug]

More *Rondout Reader*. [americananthologies.wordpress.com](http://americananthologies.wordpress.com)



# Kid Blackhawk 1 Coming of Age



<https://kidblackhawk.files.wordpress.com/2022/04/kid-blackhawk-1-3.pdf>

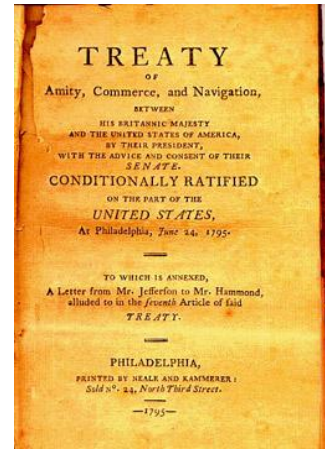
**A REAL *Comic Book* STORY**



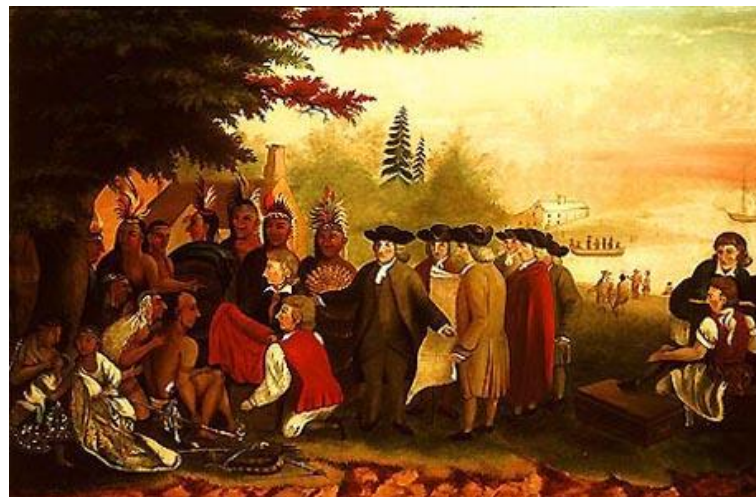
# Five



*“\$24 for Manhattan island? Forgettaboutit!”*

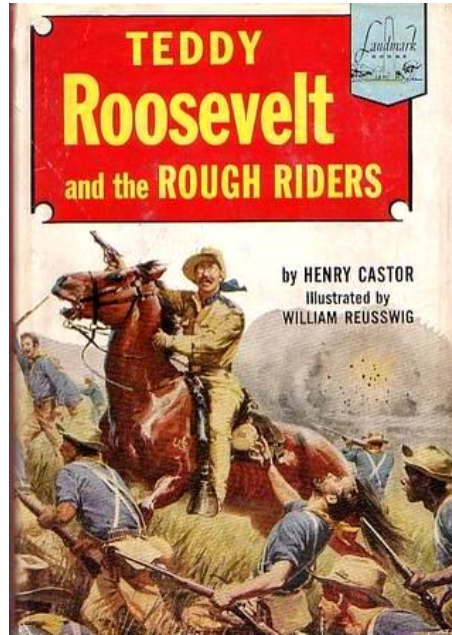


*“What a state New York doesn’t know it is! The fiercest ‘Indians’ in all America lived right here. And the most ‘democratic’!”*



*“The freedom-loving reds never had a chance against the ‘advanced’ whites. Battle after battle, the God-fearing people worshipped the winning white warrior!”*

In 1898, New Yorkers elected one governor!



Bankers, lawyers, and generals had been elected Governor; Theodore Roosevelt was a *hero*. He'd served as State Assembly Member, United States Civil Service Commissioner, president of the New York Board of Police Commissioners, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Then 'Teddy' went off to fight the Spanish-American War. As the leader of the "Rough Riders," he led the 'Charge up San Juan Hill' and was later awarded the Medal of Honor.



"Guv-nerr,"



*"Your Majesty, I've been so eager to meet you."*

*"So, tell me. As you've been counseling governors since New York first became a state, what have you learned?"*



*"Well, that I still have much to learn.  
And so does New York. This is  
not merely a land or state, always  
growing with people from all over the  
world, big cities, tiny towns, New York  
is an ongoing story, a continuing quest."*

*"And what is your quest, Your Majesty?  
Because surely you have one!"*

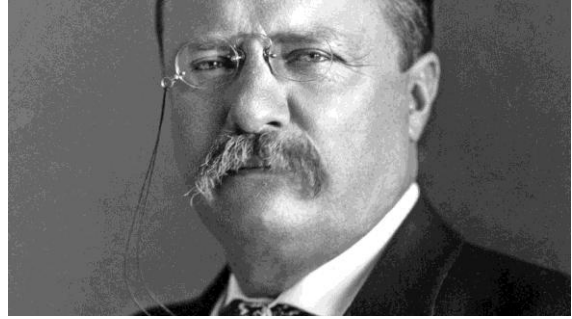
*"As I own New York State, by royal  
degree, I have every right to make sure my  
property is being well taken care of."*

*"And what does New York need most of all?"*

*"Peace!"*



*"Unfortunately, that's not New York's nature  
just yet. If there is not the war, you don't get the  
great general; if there is not a great occasion, you  
don't get a great statesman; if Lincoln had lived in a  
time of peace, no one would have known his name."*

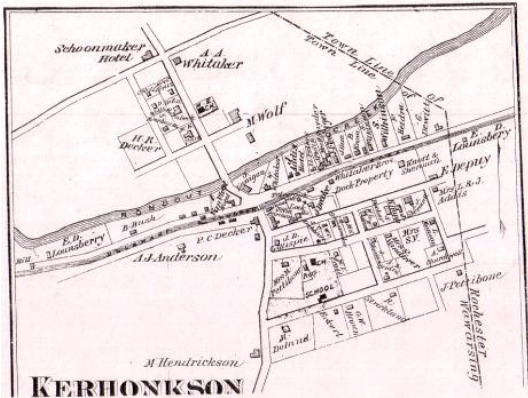


*"And the thousands slaughtered, how many of their names do we know?"*

*"Hmmm. Your wisdom has been understated, Your Majesty. But what is you want?"*

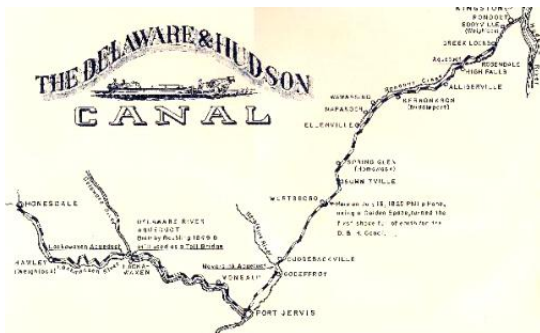
*"That my 'Royal Birthplace' grows, and grows up, with the rest of New York State."*

*'Ah, yes, Kerhonkson on the Rondout Creek."*



Loosely translated, 'Kerhonkson' means 'near shallow water'; the Rondout was navigable only by canoe and bisected the town into the Northwest and Southwest. On the Berme Road route, Main Street was in the SW section with the post office, the churches, the train station, and most of the stone and wooden homes. The NW was considered 'the wrong side of the crick' and there was only middling development.

The big change ran *along* the Rondout.



Buoyed by the success of the Erie Canal, and backed by private money, the Delaware and Hudson Canal took less than three years to dig and build using only picks, shovels, draft animals and blasting powder. Towns and villages sprang up along the D&H Canal, and industries developed based on local lumber, agricultural products, and bluestone.

Conceived in 1823 to transport anthracite coal from the Pennsylvania mines to the Hudson River at Kingston, then downriver to New York, 108 miles long with 108 locks, the D&H Canal brought forth its own culture and society that would thrive for the rest of the century.



Progress ended the canal era. Beaten out by faster, cheaper, and more reliable trains, by 1900, the D&H Canal was a long abandoned ditch; the 'Railroad Age' had begun.

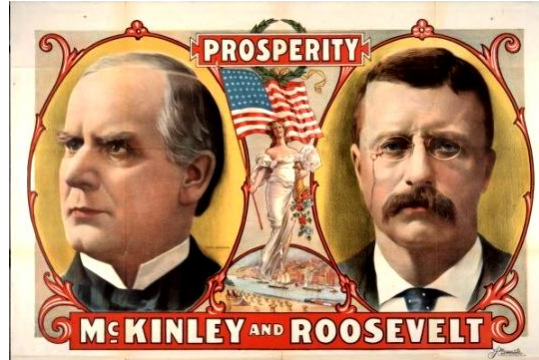


*"New York is entering yet another chapter in its story. Your 'Royal Birthplace' must rise up to face this new challenge. The quest goes on, Your Majesty."*

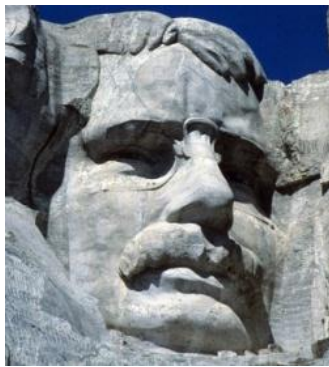
*"Positively, Guv-nerr!"*



As governor, Roosevelt improved labor laws, outlawed racial segregation in public schools, and advanced park and forestry programs. Bent on reform, he angered his own party and the opposition. To get Roosevelt out of New York, his party nominated him for Vice President and yet another Governor was off to Washington.



With the assassination of William McKinley in 1901, Roosevelt became President.



New York's first *Great American*, 'Teddy' would be admired, respected, and sometimes feared by 'all the crowned heads of Europe', win the Nobel Peace Prize and earn a spot on Mount Rushmore. Plus the Medal of Honor; if not the greatest president, the greatest *resume* in American History.



'The Iceman Cometh' could be said about Benjamin B. O'Dell, a former *ice* dealer. As governor, O'Dell consolidated overlapping state agencies, backed tenement house reform, and kept funding for the Erie Canal. After politics in the next war, O'Dell served as the State's Ice Controller.

In 1905, the first professional New York team to win a championship were...



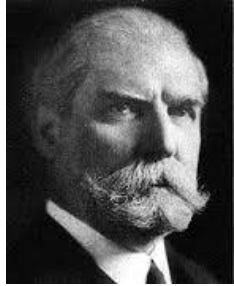
First nicknamed '*The Gothams*', the team began playing in 1883. Three years later they became the New York *Giants*.



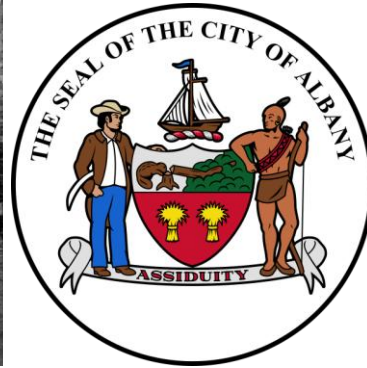
*"Going, going, that team is...  
Wait! The **GOTHAMS** sre still here!"*



After eight years in the State Senate, Frank W. Higgins' administration supported smaller government and lower taxes. His signature feat: leaving office with an \$11,000,000 surplus in the state treasury.



*“Governors Charles Evans Hughes, Horace White, and John Alden Dix—names and faces, outside of Albany, lost to history.”*



While in the big city...



*“Progress was going up and down. All aboard for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century!”*



*"Beyond horses, boats and trains, this 'automobile' will give New Yorkers independence as never before. Can't wait to see one on Berme Road rolling into Kerhonkson."*

The Gnome would get much more than he wished for.

In 1913, at West Point, the military academy on the Hudson, the powerful **Black Knights** Army football team was upset by a small Indiana school few people had ever heard of.



*"So that's what a Leprechaun looks like!"*



*"Ever since the Revolution, I believed the center of New York power was the Governor's mansion. Not now!"*



*'And no longer is the Governor the "Boss"!*



*Guv-nerr William "Plain Bill" Sulzer.  
"You are a disgrace to New York! The power of  
corruption has made you a thief and a liar!"*

Tammany Hall, a powerful political organization, sought to run the State from its base in New York City. "Plain Bill" tried to escape its influence, but only angered the big city bosses.

Tammany struck back, accusing the Governor of embezzling campaign funds and then lying to the State Assembly.

On October 17, 1913, Sulzer was impeached. A month later he was again elected to the State Assembly.



*"New York politics works in mysterious ways!"*



The former editor of the *Albany Times Union*. Lieutenant Governor Glynn became governor upon the conviction of William Sulzer, but while the outcome of the impeachment remained in dispute, both men claimed to be governor.



*"You are the gov-nerr now!. Make the people believe in New York and they will believe in themselves."*

Glynn tried hard, but was soundly defeated in the next election.

**28<sup>th</sup> July 1914**

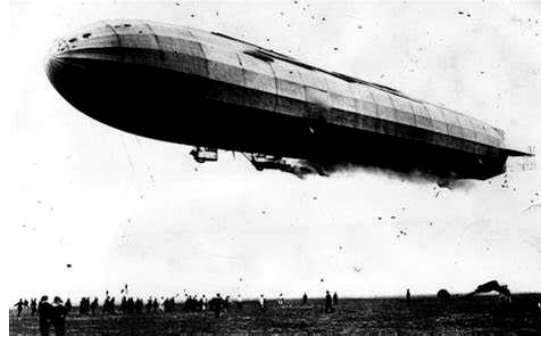
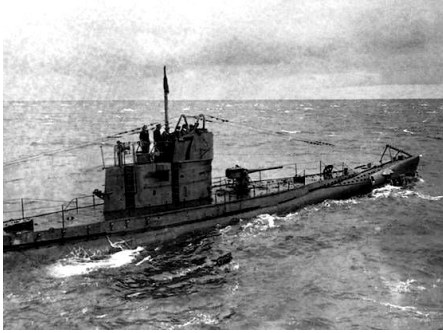
Austria Hungary declares war on Serbia



*“Not New York’s war, Guv-nerr!  
But oh, the invention and inovation! When  
once war killed hundreds, and then thousands,  
this time around, humanity at its bravest.  
will slay millions!”*



*“A war of kings and queens and Kaisers  
and the fools who obey them without question!”*



*"War all over! Killing from the sky  
and underwater!"  
And the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Knights!"*



*"This is the 'Great War', Your Majesty! I am  
mobilizing New York's Defense and its finances!  
The war to end all wars will make the world safe for Democracy."*



## 11 November 1918 - Armistice day



**63,400 New Yorkers Killed**



*"So I've been hearing for decades on end.  
But from what I've seen and felt, New York  
will never be safe from war."*

Prohibition made drinking alcohol a crime, and millionaires out of criminals.



The next election would be different; women finally got the right to vote.



*“About time, Guv-nerr!  
Lady Gnomes have been  
voting for centuries!”*

*“My State, Guv-nerr!  
You still have a lot of  
catching up to do!”*

*“You believe your kingdom is  
more democratic than my  
State?”*

*“But of course, Your Majesty!  
And I will do my best to  
make New York better!”*

Alfred E. Smith had come to Albany with a grand vision. "Street-smart" with a popular touch, the "Happy Warrior" reorganized state government, expanded support for housing, health care, and parks, and increased education budgets, but like so many before him, left office to run for President.



*"From Capital to Capitol!  
Is New York a 'pre-school' for Presidents?"*

New York Governor Alfred E. Smith ran and lost. And kept losing.



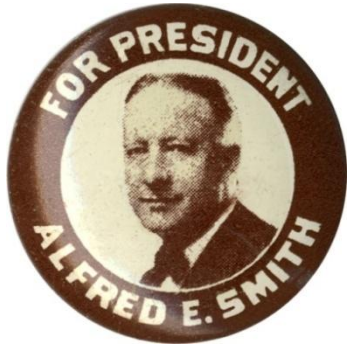
Nathan L. Miller, a staunch conservative, was a winner, defeating Governor Smith in his bid for reelection in 1920.



*"You favor the death penalty, are 'suspicious' of women voters, and dismissive of your predecessor? And you expect to keep your job?"*

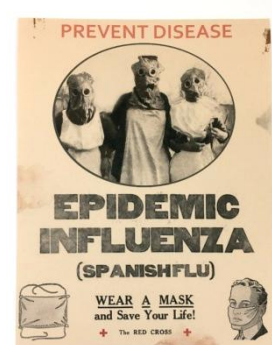
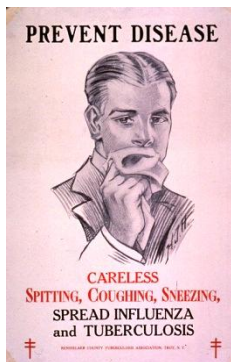
Governor Miller established a motion picture censorship commission and the New York City Transit Commission, and promoted waterpower development. He also instituted policies that saved taxpayers 20 million dollars.

Not good enough for the voters who returned Al Smith to Albany.



*“Welcome back, Guv-nerr again!  
Hopefully, this time ‘round, New York  
will be state enough for you!”*

“The war to end all wars” was near its end,, when suddenly New York, America and the world were challenged by a far deadlier foe.



## THE FIRST WAVE – SPRING 1918

The first outbreak of flu-like illnesses was detected in the U.S. in March, with more than 100 cases reported at Camp Funston in Fort Riley, Kansas.

As the U.S. was still fighting WWI, hundreds and thousands of U.S. soldiers had traveled across the Atlantic to deploy for war. This virulent strain was unusual as it was most deadly for those between the ages of 20 to 40, making veterans among the most susceptible. The mass troop movements contributed to the global spread of flu.



*“A plague, Guv-nerr! Take no chances!  
Hold nothing back! Mobilize all New York  
to stop this killer!”*

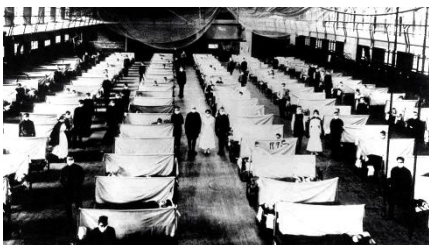


*“A damn germ I can’t even see  
and it’s killing like the damn war!”*

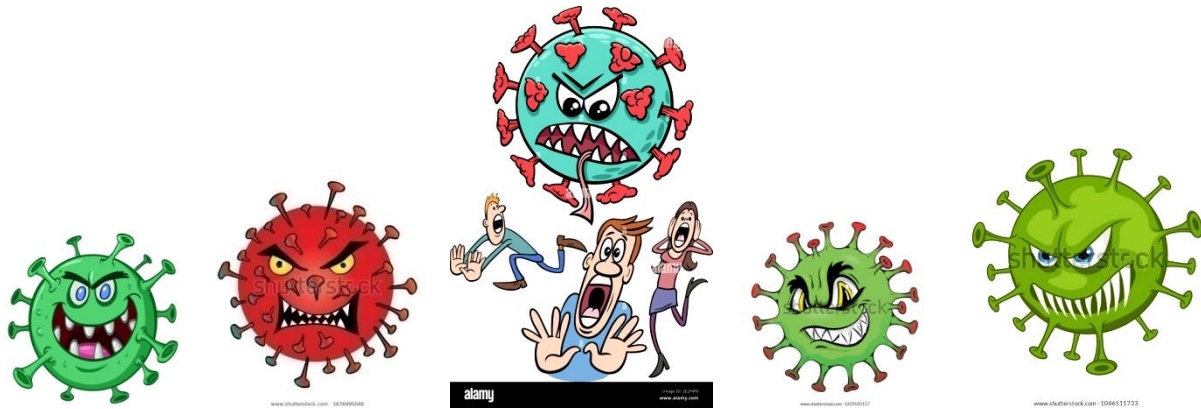
## **THE SECOND WAVE – SUMMER 1918**

In 1918, many health professionals served in the U. S. military during WWI, resulting in shortages of medical personnel around the U.S. The economy suffered as businesses and factories were forced to close due to sickness amongst workers.

This highly fatal second wave killed the most Americans.



*“Unite New York as never before!  
We’ve been invaded by a murderous army  
of invisible barbarians who kill at will!”*



*‘Death on a massive scale, worse than any war New York has ever fought! But New York will fight like never before!’*

## THE THIRD WAVE – WINTER 1918

A third wave of illness occurred during the winter and spring of 1919, adding to the pandemic death toll. The third wave of the pandemic subsided during the summer of 1919.



*“Wear a mask, wash your hands and stop your spitting!”*



*“In the end, Your Majesty, New York united against torture and triumphed!”*



**24,000+ NEW YORKERS DEAD**

The State had survived, but what had been learned? Not for another century would New York, America, and the world find out.

## **FEBRUARY 16, 1923 A BLACK DAY IN GNOME HISTORY**

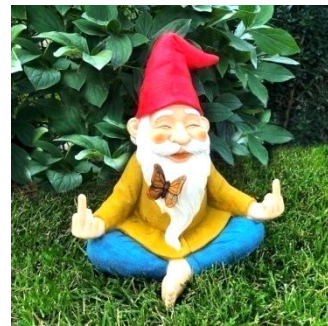
Thebes, Egypt - English archaeologist **Howard Carter** enters the sealed burial chamber of the ancient Egyptian ruler King **Tutankhamen**.





The king's burial mask and vast treasures were carefully removed, but contrary to legend, and despite a thorough search, no trace of Gnomes.

For 3,000 years, a kingdom of Gnomes had kept it hidden. Their quest thwarted, the kingdom vanished. But Gnomes never die, instead their spirits are preserved forever in stone statues ideal for gardens. (Beware of fakes.)



Deep underground, the king reassured his subjects.







*“Take heart, my beloved Gnomes,  
The fate of the Egyptian Realm will never be ours!  
Ours is the ‘Trunk of Deeds’ which New York  
will never again possess!”*



In 1923, the New York Yankees won their first World Series.



In 1927, the New York Giants won their first professional football championship.



That same year, Charles Lindbergh's solo flight from New York to Paris earned 'Lucky Lindy' a city tradition down 'The Canyon of Heroes'.



*"King for a day!"*

After Al Smith left Albany, the new Governor was from an old Hyde Park family.



*"Your Majesty! Teddy told the family all about you and we didn't doubt him for a minute!"*

*"Spare me the histrionics, Guv-nerr! You flipped my 'Royal Birthplace' like a flapjack!"*



*"Me, Your Majesty? What have I done to Kerhonkson?"*



*"Two-Oh-Nine, Guv-nerr. Two-Oh-Nine!"*

Running alongside the defunct Delaware and Hudson Canal from Port Jervis to Kingston, US 209 was one of the original highways in the 1926 System Plan and the 'Main Drag' of the Rondout Valley,

And part of the local vernacular. Instead of saying, "Get the hell out of here!" or explaining how your last job or relationship ended -"Two-Oh-Nine."



If the Gnome had laid out the road, it would have bridged the Rondout upstream, combined with Berme Road into Main Street, Kerhonkson and out via the town bridge. Instead, 209 ran by Kerhonkson on 'the wrong side of crick'. Where once Kerhonkson was *on* the 'Main Drag', now it was *off* it!

The hopeful hamlet would never recover. Things would get better before they got worse, then a little better, then much worse.

Was there anything a king could do?

The nation had bigger problems.

[Yet another shameless plug]

# Stories for a Coffee Waitress



 **ROSWELL THAT ENDS WELL**

<https://americananthologies.files.wordpress.com/2022/04/stories-for-a-coffee-waitress-1.pdf>

# Six



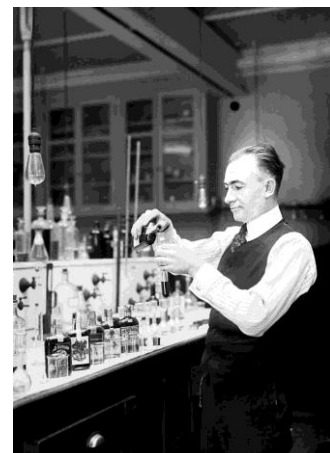
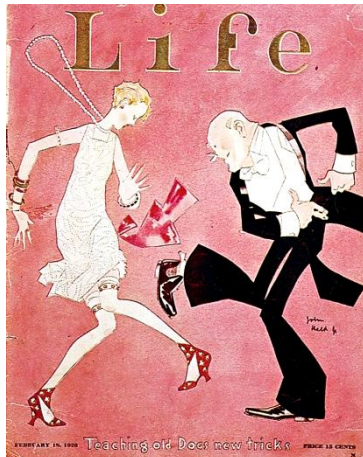
*“Don’t be alarmed, ladies and gentlemen.  
Those chains are made of chrome steel!”*

# The Roaring Twenties

"The future's uncertain  
The past on the pavement below me"  
*Charleston Lyrics*



New York was having a party. Businesses were booming. Prohibition was a joke. From the supermarkets to the stock market, millions got easy credit!



Suddenly the Good Times stopped rolling.

## OCTOBER 29, 1929 "BLACK TUESDAY" – THE STOCK MARKET CRASH!



*"America is at the end of its rope!"*

*"Then we tie a knot and hang on,  
Your Majesty. This began in New York.  
New York must lead the way out."*

A reform Democrat, FDR tackled official corruption and addressed New York's growing need for power through the development of hydroelectricity on the St. Lawrence River. He reformed the state's prison administration and built a new state prison at Attica, one day to make brutal history





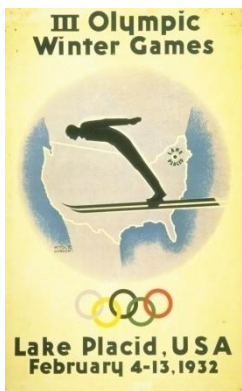
To fight the Great Depression, Roosevelt started a relief system that later became the model for the New Deal's Federal Emergency Relief Administration and then asked the state legislature for \$20 million in relief funds, which he spent mainly on public works in the hope of stimulating demand and providing employment.



*"Aid to the unemployed must be extended by Government, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of social duty."*

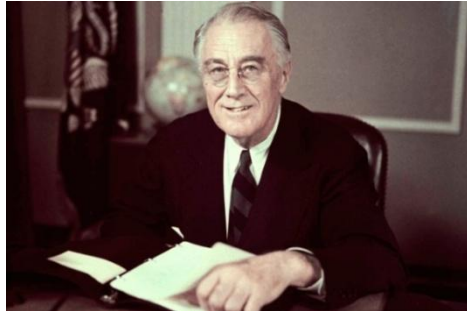


*"Good for you, Guv-nerr!  
Man needs to work!"*



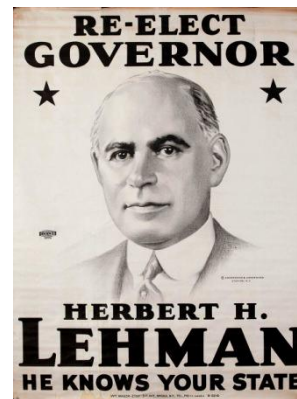
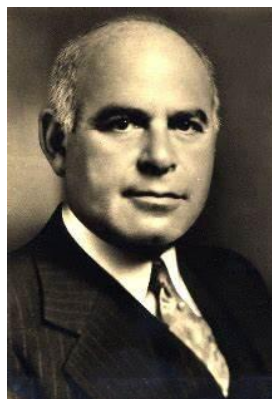
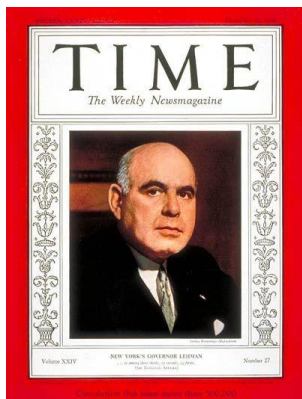


More than a politician, Roosevelt was an inspirational leader battling his own personal crisis. Before becoming Governor, he had contracted polio, a crippling disease that left his legs useless and his body in unending agony, of which the vast majority of New Yorkers were kept unaware.



*"The United States Constitution has proved itself the most marvelously elastic compilation of rules of government ever written."*

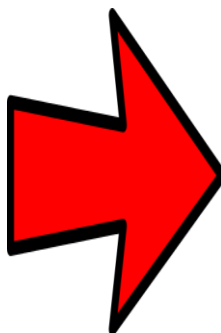
*"Read the Bible much?"*



Herbert Lehman had been in the game since 1920 and had been a strong supporter of Alfred E. Smith. He resigned from Lehman Brothers upon taking office as lieutenant governor.

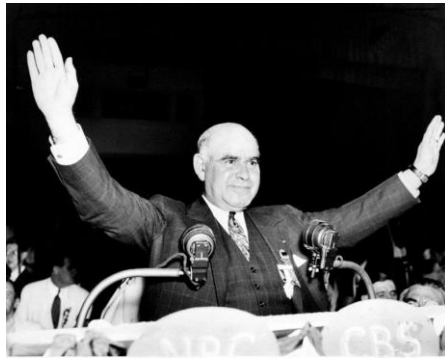
Then he won the governor's seat in 1932

Franklyn Roosevelt introduced the new governor to the king, and then FDR left for his next job.





*“Albany to Washington DC!  
 Many were called, but  
 only the Roosevelts were chosen!”*



*“Our New Deal in New York!”*



*‘No overconfidence!  
 Not now, Guv-nerr!’*

A successful businessman, Herbert Lehman served four terms as Governor of New York, elected in 1932 and re-elected in 1934, 1936 and 1938.

Lehman was a supporter of FDR's New Deal and implemented a similar program in New York. Elements of this program included an unemployment insurance system, an improved workmen's compensation plan, minimum wage standards for women and children, and a "Little Wagner Act" to cover workers engaged in intrastate commerce.

With perfect timing, Hollywood produced “monsters”!





New York got its signature structure – Indeed! **The Empire State Building** was “The Eighth Wonder of the World”!

Unfortunately, the world was running out of wonders.



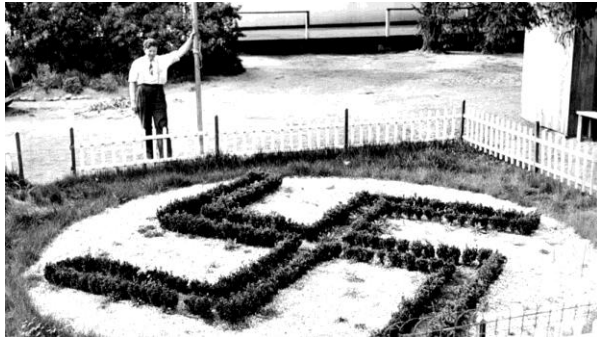
*“The next war will be very different from the last!”*

## NAZIS IN NEW YORK – 1936-1939

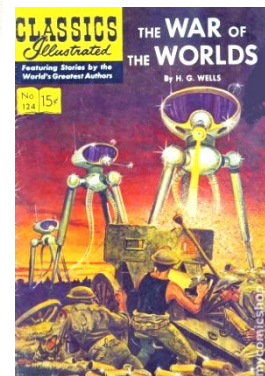
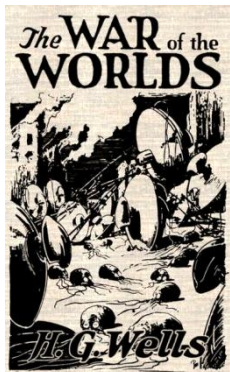
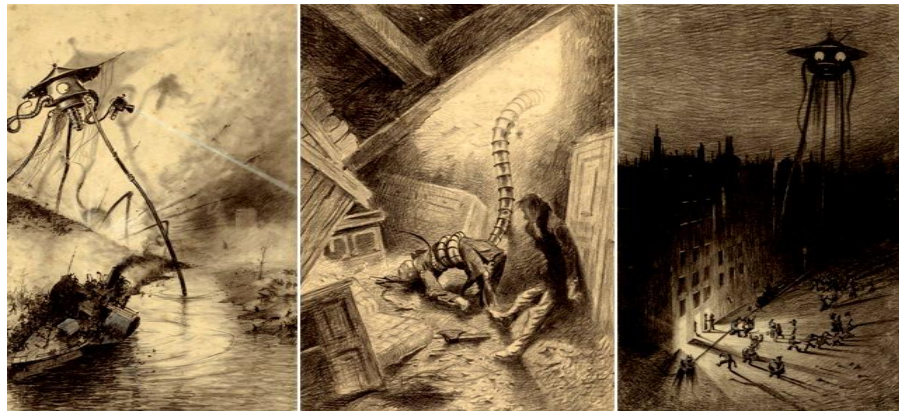


In 1936, the **German-American Bund** was formed in the United States to advocate for policies beneficial to Nazi Germany. Active throughout the latter half of the 1930s, organizing rallies and marches.

The **Bund**'s most notable activities ran summer camps across America that were similar to Hitler Youth Camps. Camp Siegfried was located in Yaphank, New York and had its own train on the Long Island Railroad, the "Siegfried Special."



## OCTOBER 30, 1938 MARTIANS INVADE AMERICA?



Fantasy as fortuneteller? Ironically, compared to upcoming events, Wells' and Welles' merciless, all-conquering Martians would prove to have been underwritten.

## MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - 1939



## JULY 4 – LOU GEHRIG @ YANKEE STADIUM

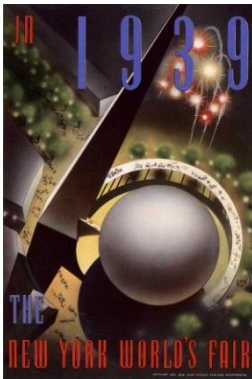


*“Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.”*



*“Positively the greatest New Yorker ever born on Second Avenue!”*

## “THE WORLD OF TOMORROW”



In New York City, a super-character created in Cleveland powered up a struggling industry.



## SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 WORLD WAR II BEGINS



Well-trained and equipped, the Nazi *blitzkrieg* was the future of war!



On June 12, 1939, in Cooperstown, the Baseball Hall of Fame was dedicated. Often imitated, it would never be equaled. In 1940, the New York Rangers won hockey's Stanley Cup. Not for 53 years would they win another.

In the early morning on the Friday after Thanksgiving, the Oval Office was empty. But not for long. The President had call for an emergency meeting and no one dared to be late.



*“Ladies and gentlemen, the world is on fire! The Germans, the Italians, and the Japanese... America must help extinguish their global blaze!”*





*“Mr. President, you instituted a draft, but we’ll need months, years to train a real army!”*



*‘Another war thousands of miles away and thousands of American boys killed? NO!’*



*“This war is one all the world must fight! Despotism and tyranny cannot be allowed to win!”*

**At that very moment...**



*“Negotiations would be useless! But how do we join the fight without joining the war?”*



***“Ding-a-ling-a-ling!”***





*"Who?"*

*"Oh, I do! Please clear my office!"*



*"Mr. President, he says he's 'The King', that you'd understand!"*

Within a minute, the president had privacy.



*"Your Majesty, so glad you learned how to use a telephone!"*



*"An essential device, Mister President. Wish I had one for my throne!"*





*“The planet is be overrun by the vast armies of tyranny! How does America fight for freedom thousands of miles away?”*

*“If you cannot join the fighting forces, send them the tools to defeat the fanatics!”*



*“American-made weapons?”*

*“By the bushel, Mr. President! Kiss the Depression, Good-bye!”*

*“Misery and hopelessness gave birth to the Nazis. The industrial might of America will doom them!”*

*“Now you’re talking, Mr. President! And I love your new title!”*






*“Not telling, Your Majesty, but selling! I’ve got to get the American people behind me! Got to name this idea!”*



*‘Yes, sir, Mr. President!  
And I’ve got it...  
‘America – Armorer of the Allies!’  
What do you think?’*



We enter parliament in order to supply ourselves, in the arsenal of democracy, with its own weapons. If democracy is so stupid as to give us free tickets and salaries for this bear's work, that is its affair. We do not come as friends, nor even as neutrals. We come as enemies. As the wolf bursts into the flock, so we come.

(Joseph Goebbels)

izQuotes



*“I am not a king, Your Majesty!  
Nor will I ever try to be.  
But I am a New Yorker, full  
of spirit. It will be American spirit  
that will beat these bastards!”*



## DECEMBER 29, 1940 - PRESIDENTIAL RADIO BROADCAST



*“My friends:  
This is not a fireside chat on war.  
It is a talk on national security;  
Some of us like to believe that  
even if Britain falls, we are still  
safe, because of the broad expanse  
of the Atlantic and of the Pacific.”*



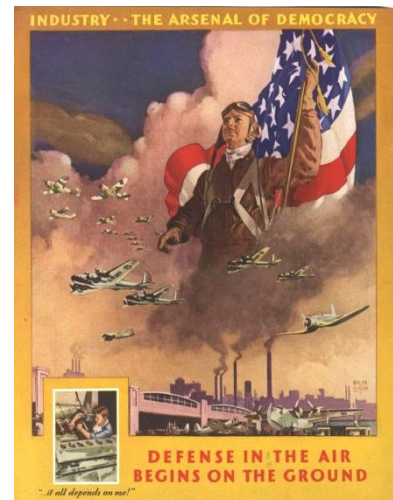
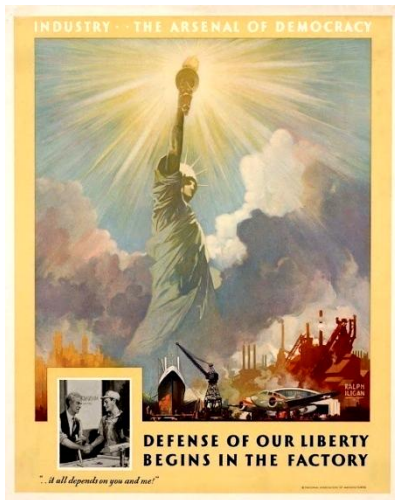
*"If Great Britain goes down, the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, and the high seas—and they will be in a position to bring enormous military and naval resources against this hemisphere."*



*"Emphatically we must get these weapons to them, get them to them in sufficient volume and quickly enough, so that we and our children will be saved the agony and suffering of war which others have had to endure."*



*"Our national policy is not directed toward war, the strength of this nation shall not be diluted by the failure of the Government to protect the economic well-being of its citizens."*



*"The nation expects our defense industries to continue operation without interruption by strikes or lockouts. It expects and insists that management and workers will reconcile their differences by voluntary or legal means."*

*"The United States of America will become ...*

**'The ARSENAL of DEMOCRACY!'**

*I believe that the Axis powers are not going to win this war."*



**“The Arsenal of Democracy’,  
I love it! What do you think,  
Your Majesty?”**

*“Salvage drives, scrap metal,  
even paper and other materials!  
Get New York, the whole country  
working together. No power on earth  
can defeat a united United States!”*



*“Not bad for a President!”*

*“Now you’re talkin’, Guv-nerr!”*



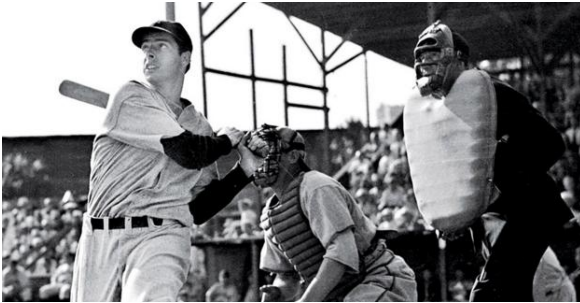
## MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - 1941



From Long Island comes New York's first carrier-based fighter.

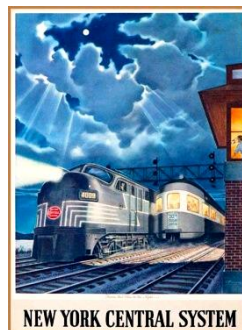
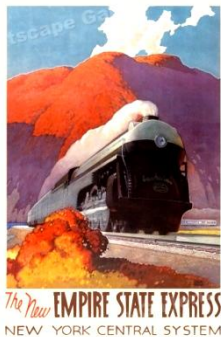


The **F4F Wildcat** would prove no match for the Japanese **Zero**.



Joe Dimaggio's 56-game hitting streak. Ted Williams hits .406. Neither had 200 hits.

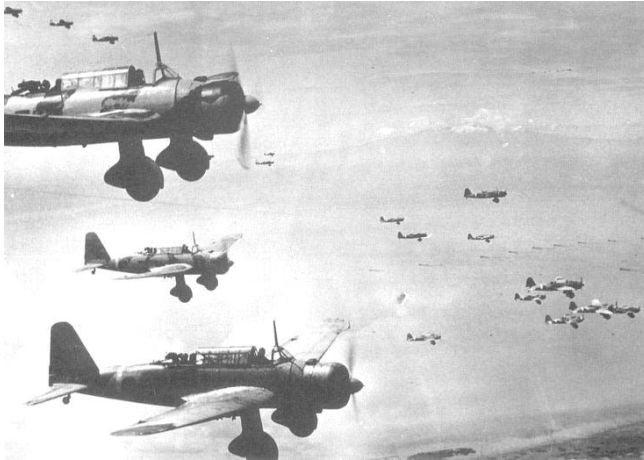
## **JUNE 21, 1941 – THE NAZIS ATTACK THE SOVIET UNION**



*"I've been working on the railroad  
all the livelong day."*



The enemy was coming by sea and by air.



## DECEMBER 7, 1941 JAPAN ATTACKS AMERICA



*"A date which will live in infamy"*

**(TO BE CONTINUED...)**