

The Magazine
of the
New York
State Museum

Legacy

VOL. 6 • NO. 1
SUMMER 2010

INSIDE:

A New Exhibition
of NYS Landscapes

New York's Coyote

The Colonial Albany
Social History Project

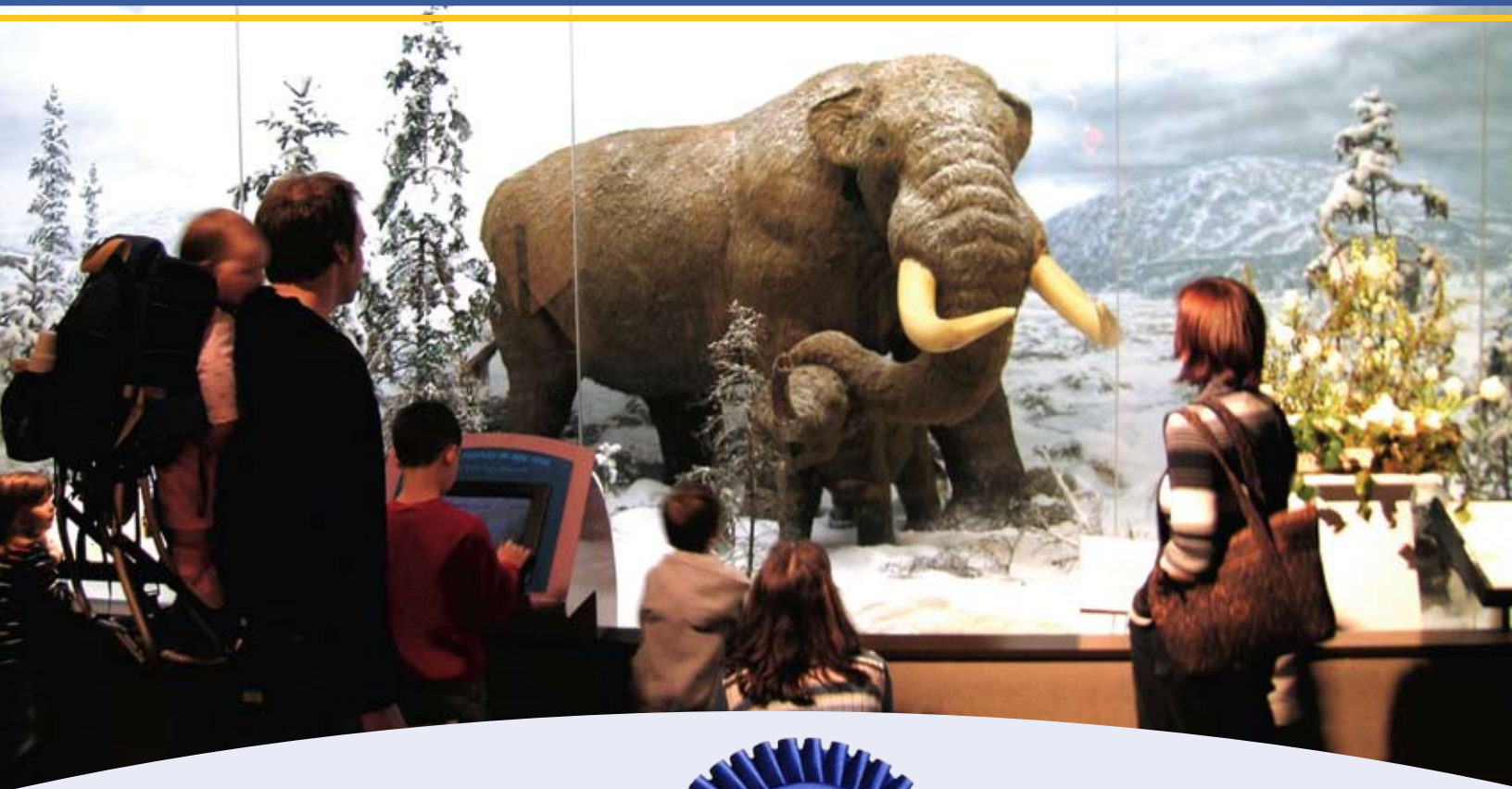
Karner Blue Butterfly

Fuertes's Mountain Gorilla

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NEW YORK State
Museum



Thank you for making the New York State Museum No. 1!

- "Best Museum" and "Best Museum for Kids" in the *Times Union's* 2010 Best of the Capital Region Readers' Poll
- "Best Museum" in *Capital Region Living* magazine's* Best of the Capital Region 2010
- "Best Museum" in *Metroland's* Reader's Picks 2010, "Best Museum (Cultural History)" in *Metroland's* Best Of (2010)
- "Best Museum (Kids)" in *Metroland's* Best of the Capital Region 2009



More than 750,000 visitors learn and discover at the New York State Museum each year. These visitors have a significant economic impact on the region, according to a recent study by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Visitors to the State Museum and the 21 other cultural and historic attractions participating in the survey generate an estimated \$38 million in sales for the region stretching from Albany to Rome.

See what makes the State Museum a standout by visiting the galleries and browsing our website at www.nysm.nysed.gov.

More than 2,500 people follow the State Museum on Facebook. Become a fan today to receive information about the latest exhibitions, programs, and discoveries.

"You can seriously spend hours there ... and don't forget to ride the carousel before you leave!"

— A voter in the *Times Union's* 2010 Best of the Capital Region Readers' Poll



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by Dr. Norton G. Miller



Above: Fifty years ago Dr. Eugene C. Ogden devised samplers to study of the amount of pollen and spores released in the air.



With a total of six volunteers, the osteology lab was a busy place this summer.

On the Cover:

Mountain Gorilla
(*Gorilla beringei beringei*)
Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874–1927)
Cast bronze, 1923
8 ¾ inches x 9 inches x 7 ¼ inches diameter
NYSM H-1977.74.121

Cover Inset:

The male Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*), from the State Museum's entomology collection, measures approximately 1 inch in wing expanse.

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Now federally listed as an endangered species, the striking Karner blue butterfly was first discovered in the United States by a State Museum entomologist.
by Dr. Timothy L. McCabe



Above: This photograph, titled *Northern Survey Company*, is part of the exhibition *Not Just Another Pretty Place: The Landscape of New York*. The show opens September 3, in the West Gallery.

Below: When comparing eastern and western coyotes, Museum researchers collected and measured 196 skulls.





Legacy

The Magazine of the
New York State Museum

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Legacy is published quarterly by the
New York State Museum, Cultural
Education Center, Albany, NY 12230.
Members can receive the magazine
via e-mail. For information about
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director's note

Sometimes it's difficult not getting a "big head" about the Museum. The excellence embodied in our public spaces, research, stewardship, and programming is continuously recognized. A recent Capital Region survey ranked the Museum as the "Best Museum" and "Best Museum for Kids" in the area. The award cited the expansive galleries, breadth of exhibits, the ever-popular carousel, and free admission as some of the reasons why the State Museum wins this category year after year. These awards are just the most recent of many the Museum has received (see the inside front cover of this issue).

Our recognition for excellence derives not only from the terrific exhibitions that we mount in our galleries but also from the overall visitor experience our staff delivers day after day, week after week. The graphic panels that announce our exhibitions, posters based on our exhibits, and calendars celebrating our collections have won national awards. Our magazine and our media relations office have won awards for excellence. Year after year, our staff members are singled out by their peers with awards that applaud their contributions and with competitive grants that support their important research.

The New York State Museum is a treasure for all New Yorkers. We appreciate the support and recognition we receive from our visitors and our peers, and we pledge to strive for excellence in every aspect of our operations. We invite you to connect with the Museum—visit our galleries, browse our website, and become a fan on Facebook—and see why this is such an extraordinary place.

Dr. Clifford A. Siegfried
Director, New York State Museum

www.nysm.nysed.gov

Not Just Another Pretty Place: The Landscape of New York



The Cut, Cecil Chichester (1891–1963). Oil on canvas, c. 1938. 24 ¼ inches x 30 ¼ inches. NYSM 1997.11.1

The new exhibition *Not Just Another Pretty Place: The Landscape of New York* explores the different ways artists, photographers, scientists, and others have depicted our state. It is the first exhibition of landscape art entirely from the State Museum's collections.

Visitors will see more than 100 landscape scenes in the form of paintings, photographs, prints, ceramics, furniture, engravings, and sketchbooks that span nearly 200 years. The rich and varied landscape of New York State has been a subject of interest to artists, photographers, historians, and scientists for hundreds of years. Whether documenting the landscape for political and scientific reasons or creating beautiful paintings for contemplation and

admiration, residents and visitors have been fascinated by the wide variety of vistas that New York provides.

The exhibition discusses several ways the landscape has been recorded, including documentation of the land, birds-eye views of communities, and photographs of the family home. It also explores how artists romanticized the landscape in their attempts to capture the natural beauty of the state in their paintings, photographs, and prints. In addition, the exhibition presents cityscapes that have inspired artists. Other sections of the exhibition show how New York's landscapes have been used to encourage tourism, decorate home furnishings, and provide financial assistance to the arts community during the



Sheraton side chair, attributed to Thomas Ash II. Painted and stenciled maple, c. 1820. NYSM H-1971.141.1

Great Depression. Not all the landscapes are actual locations in the state; several landscapes are imaginative works that reflect the artist's impression of New York State.

The exhibition opens September 3 in West Gallery. A companion exhibition, *Wish You Were Here*, featuring photographs of New York's varied landscapes, opens the same day. Members of the Exhibitions staff selected the photographs from hundreds of images submitted by people throughout the state. When viewed together, the photographs confirm that New York's varied landscapes continue to fascinate. Additional images can be viewed in an online exhibition on the Museum's website. ■

Must-See Exhibitions

Current Exhibitions:

Focus on Nature XI
Through October 31

Citizen Soldier: New York's National Guard in the American Century
Through March 2011

Not Just Another Pretty Place: The Landscape of New York
Through March 2011



The exhibition *Derby Doings: The All-American Soap Box Derby*, on view in the Main Lobby through August 18, provided a brief history of the All-American Soap Box Derby and the Capital District's participation over the years. Albany's first competition dates to 1940 when 15,000 people watched 100 boys compete in the first races on Clermont Street. The exhibition featured a Soap Box Derby Car from 1949 (NYSM H-1995.71.1) and a contemporary Super Stock model built in 2007.

For more details on exhibitions, go to www.nysm.nysed.gov/.



Marcos Antonio dos Santos-Silva,
Brazil, Barata do coqueiro
(*Coraliomela thoracica*)
Watercolor, 2009, 35 x 25 inches.

What's New at www.nysm.nysed.gov

Although the earthquake tremors that shook New York state on June 23 might seem like a rare occurrence, earthquakes happen in New York with some regularity. A new website for the New York State Geological Survey provides details on popular geology topics such as earthquakes, rocks, minerals, and fossils as well as information on continuing research by Museum staff. It also offers teaching resources, links to geology publications published by the Museum, highlights of the geological collections—rocks and minerals, oil and gas, and paleontology, a guide to the rocks of the Empire State Plaza buildings, and more. <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/nysgs/>

Nearly 50 years after its initial publication, former State Archaeologist Dr. William A. Ritchie's *Typology and Nomenclature for New York Projectile Points* (1961, revised 1971) remains a basic reference for archaeologists working in the Northeast. The new online version of the book includes color images of selected artifacts that accompany the original text and illustrations of projectile points from New York. Many of the projectile points shown in the color images are from the Museum's collections.

<http://collections.nysm.nysed.gov/projectilepoints/>

The catalog for *Focus on Nature XI*, the natural history illustration exhibition on view through October 31, can be browsed and downloaded from the Museum's website. The catalog, which is presented as a PDF document, includes an image and artist's description for each of the 93 illustrations in the exhibition. The *Focus on Nature* Web page also includes a pictorial gallery of the illustrations; viewers can click on an image to read the artist's statement about the work. In addition, viewers can see which *Focus on Nature XI* works were chosen as award winners. This year, the Museum granted 13 Purchase Awards and the selected works will be added to the Museum's illustration collections.

<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/fon/exhibitions/index.html>

NSF Grants Support Undergraduate Researchers on Museum Projects

Two Museum scientists recently received supplemental grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to hire undergraduate students to work on their ongoing research projects this summer.

Dr. Jason Cryan, who directs research in the Museum's DNA sequencing laboratory, and Dr. Roland Kays, curator of mammals, were awarded NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) supplements. This was the first time Museum scientists have received this type of grant.

"The summer field season is a busy time, and we always need more field help to make the most of the experimental setup," says

Dr. Kays. Earlier this summer, Dr. Kays spent two weeks introducing Brian Watts to his field research project on the dispersal and predation of seeds by mammals at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. Watts, a student at the University of Georgia, works as part of a team of researchers investigating how rodents, when they disperse or eat seeds, affect forest regeneration. The study uses motion-sensitive radio transmitters to track what happens to seeds.

Dr. Cryan is the principal investigator on a five-year NSF grant to train new experts in the taxonomy and evolution of a group of plant-eating insects

called Auchenorrhyncha, which includes Cicadoidea (cicadas), Cercopoidea (spittlebugs), and Fulgoroidea (planthoppers)—three groups of under-studied but economically important insects. The project, funded by NSF since 2005, is a partnership between the New York State Museum, Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Connecticut, and an international team of collaborators with expertise in the field. The REU supplement he received supports the summer research of three undergraduate students from the University of Connecticut, each of whom are working on revising the taxonomy of a different group of cicadas. ■

For
A LOOK BACK
at an important
scientific discovery
that ultimately helped
provide relief from
allergy symptoms,
see page 13.

Volunteers Interpret Skeletal Remains While Gaining Critical Experience



During her last year of college, Melanie Brasor interned in the Museum's osteology lab where she documented skeletal remains. This summer, while she completed her master's thesis and looked ahead to starting on her teaching degree, she returned to the lab—this time to examine human juvenile remains from a 4,000-year-old archaeological site.

"It was recreation," says Melanie, who received a master's degree in anthropology from the University at Albany in August. "Other people go boating, I go look at bones." She was not alone in this pursuit, or in her passion for interpreting what human skeletal remains can reveal.

Melanie and five other women volunteered in the lab this summer, inventorying and documenting bones. The State Museum receives skeletal remains when, for example, bones are donated in an archaeological collection or an unmarked cemetery is accidentally uncovered during a construction project. For the volunteers, the lab provides opportunities to work with real bones and learn the subtle clues used to interpret them. This is an important experience not always

readily available to students studying anthropology or pursuing a career in bioarchaeology.

Shoko Kubitera, a May graduate of Binghamton University, augmented her school work with the hands-on experience of inventorying skeletal remains.

"I've seen so many things that I didn't see at school," she says, such as juvenile skeletons and bones with evidence of trauma. The opportunity to gain research experience with bones showing signs of trauma also drew Lori Critcher back to the lab for the month of July. Lori, a former intern in the lab who is now in the Ph.D. program at Ohio State University, studies warfare in ancient societies and related topics. For her, identifying and documenting bones provides essential experience that can't be gained from books or in the classroom. "I could be in that lab for 12 hours, and it never feels like work," she says.

Dawn Lawrence, a past graduate assistant intern at the lab who is now pursuing a Ph.D. at the University at Albany, would likely agree. "I'm doing something I really

enjoy," says Dawn, explaining that she feels a sense of satisfaction as she helps analyze skeletal remains. "You learn so much by seeing many different collections, you learn about the variations of human bones."

All the volunteers agree that hands-on experience is the only way to become familiar and experienced with identifying bones. Kenya Oliver, a long-term volunteer who is in the Ph.D. program at UAlbany, studies paleoanthropology—the study of fossil humans—and learns osteology by doing. She has inventoried several collections, which sometimes contain bone fragments, to determine the age, sex, and possible background of individuals. "You're forced to learn it when it's hands on," she says.

The opportunity to learn led Annika Anderson, a senior at Emma Willard, to spend two weeks in the lab. While she studied osteology on her own, she inventoried skeletal remains recovered from an accidental discovery. Annika plans

to study anthropology in college and described her time in the lab as an "invaluable experience."

Part of that experience included meeting and learning from the other volunteers. The lab has volunteers and interns year-round, but with six volunteers this summer, it was the largest number of volunteers at one time.

"There are other people who are this passionate about what I love," says Annika. "I like being able to put the person back together to who they were."

Their passion did not go unnoticed by the Museum staff. "In this time of cutbacks, volunteer help is more important than ever but these volunteers have been extraordinary," says Lisa Anderson, curator of bioarchaeology at the Museum. "They are all very talented, and I can't say enough about how fortunate we've been to have their help. To spend time here when they could be working or on vacation is true dedication and we really appreciate it!" ■

The volunteers, who included one high school student, a recent college graduate, a graduate student, and three Ph.D. students, shared an interest in interpreting skeletal remains. Top, from left to right: Shoko Kubitera, Melanie Brasor, Annika Anderson, Dawn Lawrence, Kenya Oliver, and Lori Critcher.

New York's Coyote—What Is It? Where Did It Come From?

DR. ROLAND W. KAYS



Right: A motion-sensitive camera trap catches a pair of coyotes exploring the Albany Pine Bush.

Who are you? Where did you come from? This pair of questions greets any newcomer, be they a new family moving in down the street or a new species of animal colonizing an area. A coyote-like animal moved into New York 70 years ago, but never gave its name. It also failed to mention how it got here; from the west or north? On four feet or in someone's truck? Maybe it was always here and we just never noticed?

The fossil record provides an answer for the last question—there is no evidence for coyotes living in New York since it was covered in tundra at the last glaciation. Instead wolves were here, hunting deer, beaver and elk, and threatening colonist's livestock. Fear made the wolf public enemy number one, and the government paid bounties to encourage their persecution. Sometime in the 1890s the last wolf was shot and the state had no wild canid population.

Over the next 60 years, there were periodic reports of wolves and coyotes around the state. Some of these turned out to be feral dogs, others were pet wolves. Some were coyotes, brought into the state mistakenly by fox-hunting clubs. Dishonest animal dealers would sell coyote pups as foxes to the clubs. As they grew up and revealed their true identity, some were set loose.

By the 1940s the records of coyote-like creatures were becoming more of a regular occurrence. These records started in St. Lawrence County and radiated out in all directions, eastward into New England, south toward New York City, and even back in a westward direction toward the Finger Lakes. These were no longer a few escaped pets, but a breeding population. These wild animals apparently crossed the St. Lawrence River from Ontario and were finding prime habitat everywhere they went. Their populations continued to grow

over the ensuing 30 years, and today they are a relatively common, if elusive, species in wild, rural, and urban areas.

New York's New Top Predator

But what is this thing? Everyone recognized that these animals were larger than western coyotes. Typical western coyotes weigh 25–30 pounds while New York animals were averaging 35–40 pounds, with a few maxing out around 50 pounds. They looked different too; hunters and trappers were bringing back a variety of odd-looking animals, including some that were all black or very pale-colored; others had reddish fur, shaggy coats, or even German-shepard like markings.

The widespread assumption was that coyotes had hybridized with dogs, and the name "coy-dog" became popular. Coyotes, dogs, and wolves are all close evolutionary cousins, all part of the genus *Canis*, and all biologically able to cross-breed and

Dr. Roland W. Kays is the curator of mammals at the New York State Museum.

foster fertile offspring. In the 1960s two biologists from Harvard studied the skulls of all three canids to compare them with eastern “coydogs.” The skulls of eastern coyotes were most similar to western coyotes, with some resemblance to wolves. The eastern coyote skulls had little in common with dog skulls, or even with the skulls of known coy-dog hybrids raised in captivity.

The mystery continued over the next four decades, with many theories but little new data. Were the eastern coyotes larger because of genetics (i.e. wolf hybridization) or the environment? Western coyotes prefer to use open country and eat primarily rabbits, mice, and fruit. Eastern coyotes use all types of forests and eat more deer and fewer mice. Maybe the abundance of food and different environment allows eastern coyotes to grow larger without any genetic influence—just like people would with different diets and exercise regimes.

New Data

Modern genetic techniques offer biologists a more sophisticated tool for studying this question. Instead of just ranking how similar animals are through skull measurements, we can also deduce their origins by tracking the evolutionary history recorded in their DNA. Together with two colleagues from the New York State Museum, I explored the genetics of eastern coyotes to try and provide a better answer as to what it is and how it got here.

Our approach was to examine a relatively small portion of the canid DNA, but to do this across as many animals as possible, to

map out geographic patterns. We obtained data from almost 700 animals collected from coyote hunters in Ohio east to New Jersey, and north into Maine and southern Quebec. This included 350 New York animals from 45 different counties.

The results were simple, but striking. The Northeast population of coyotes had strong evidence for past hybridization with wolves, but almost none for dog hybridization. Approximately 20 percent of the eastern coyotes we tested had a type of DNA typical of wolves from eastern Canada and the Great Lakes region, while only one sample was dog-like. This is strong evidence for recent (last 100 years) hybridization with wolves. Since that initial cross-breeding, hybrid animals have continued to cross back with coyotes, wolves, and other hybrids, producing what is known as a “hybrid swarm.” All populations we examined contained

percentage of genetic material of individual animals that comes from either wolves or coyotes. However, eastern coyotes are more similar in size and appearance to coyotes than wolves, and coyote-like genotypes were more common in our study. Therefore, it seems that eastern coyotes are more like coyotes with a dash of wolf than vice versa.

We found only one animal with dog-like DNA. We can not rule out the idea that there was initially more hybridization with dogs when coyotes first colonized an area but that this genetic signature has since been swamped out by coyote and wolf genes. The rarity of dog genes surprised us a bit, since many of the animals we analyzed looked like what you would expect from a coy-dog.

In addition to analyzing genetic samples, we also collected and measured 196 skulls from the Northeast. We confirmed the

... all northeastern coyotes contain a blend of wolf and coyote genes. Because we only looked at a small portion of their DNA, we can not estimate the percentage of genetic material of individual animals that comes from either wolves or coyotes. However, eastern coyotes are more similar in size and appearance to coyotes than wolves, and coyote-like genotypes were more common in our study. Therefore, it seems that eastern coyotes are more like coyotes with a dash of wolf than vice versa.

a combination of wolf-like and coyote-like genes.

Thus, all northeastern coyotes contain a blend of wolf and coyote genes. Because we only looked at a small portion of their DNA, we can not estimate the

earlier work showing that eastern coyote skulls were larger than western coyotes, especially in being extra-wide. In addition, eastern coyotes are sexually dimorphic, with males being larger than females. This dimor-



Above: Two specimens from the Museum's mammal collections show the difference in skull width between the western coyotes found in Ohio and the larger eastern coyote-wolf hybrids found in New York.

phism is also seen in wolf populations, but not in coyotes. Larger skulls would help an animal hunt and eat deer. The increased consumption of deer in the east is one of the primary ecological differences vs. western coyotes. Our data suggest that hybridization with wolves allowed eastern coyotes to rapidly evolve larger skulls, which made them better adapted to eastern forests where deer offer an abundant food option.

Where Did It Come From?

Coyotes made headlines as they spread east from their original range in the Great Plains. The arrival of a new top predator does not go unnoticed, and scientists and newspapers alike took notice. From these records we can trace their route into New York along two separate fronts: a slow-moving front coming eastward from Indiana through Ohio and Pennsylvania and a fast-moving front from the Great Lakes south through Ontario.

Coyotes moving through the Great Lakes and Ontario encountered wolf populations and this seems to be where the hybridization occurred. This influx of wolf genes,

and ensuing rapid evolution into a larger type of coyote, allowed them to be better deer hunters. This, in turn, helped the northern front move five times faster than the animals moving through Ohio, which never encountered wolf populations.

Eastern coyote populations that originated from this northern colonization front have a unique genetic signature. First, about 20 percent of animals have wolf-like mitochondrial DNA. Their migration also left a second unique pattern in their genetics—very low diversity, with only three genetic types present throughout the region. Typical western coyote populations include many dozens of genetic types. We believe that this low diversity is the result of a very limited dispersal of coyotes from Ontario across the St. Lawrence River into New York. Possibly just a handful of females made it across. This very low diversity is seen in all populations from central New York and Pennsylvania east through New England and into Quebec, and suggests that the sporadic introduction of coyotes by hunting clubs or pet owners did not have

an influence on the colonization of the region by coyotes. If these introduced animals had survived and bred, they would have injected more genetic diversity into the population, which would still be evident today.

The genetic pattern we observed in Ohio was much different with a high variety of genetic types and no wolf-like influences. This is typical of western coyote populations, and suggests these animals faced no hybridization or major barriers to their movement.

Western Pennsylvania and western New York are now a sort of contact zone between these different types of coyotes; western coyotes are spreading from Ohio while northeastern coyotes, or “coy-wolves” are moving in from the north and east. How these types interact is anyone's guess. Do they recognize each other as being different? Will they breed and further mix up the genetics of eastern coyotes? Will the strains with a dash of wolf DNA survive better because they are more efficient deer hunters? Or, will the pure coyotes survive better because they are better able to sneak around and avoid conflict with humans?

Last but not least—what should we call this animal? Coydog is inaccurate, since we found so little evidence for dog genes in the population. Coywolf might be more accurate, but may also overstate the amount of wolf influence. For now I prefer the term “Eastern Coyote,” since it implies the animal is still a coyote, but is different than its western cousin. Just as wiley, no doubt, but even more adaptable, with a little help from the wolves. ■

Fuertes's MOUNTAIN GORILLA

BY RONALD J. BURCH



In the August 1925 issue of the French periodical *Revue du Vrai et du Beau* [Review of the True and Beautiful], a brief article and a photograph document a pair of bronze bookends, each of which depicts a gorilla contemplating a butterfly. The sculpture had been loaned to an exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia by the artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Significantly, the reviewer cites the bookends as “the only sculpture which this artist has ever executed.”

A native of Ithaca, N.Y., watercolorist Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874–1927) has long been renowned as one of America’s finest painters of birds [More than 40 of his original watercolors were featured in the recent exhibition *Birds of New York and the Paintings of Louis Agassiz Fuertes*.] That he would begin sculpting at age 50 is indicative of an inquisitive intellect active since childhood. As a young man, Fuertes was chosen as a member of the Alaska Expedition of 1899, funded by railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman. The young artist roamed woods and glaciers, sketching, shooting, and skinning hundreds of birds to study.

Fuertes’ naturalist interests subsequently took

him on expeditions to the American southwest, the Bahamas, the Pacific Coast, Canadian Rockies, Mexico, South America, and Jamaica. In the early 1920s he participated in an expedition to Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia), where he was exposed to the habitat of Africa’s mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*). This strong, powerful, yet shy and gentle creature apparently captured Fuertes’ imagination. Using photographs and zoo specimens to create the original clay model, he subsequently rendered the primate’s essential nature in cast bronze.

Fuertes was killed in a railroad crossing accident near Unadilla, N.Y., in August 1927, ironically two years to the month after the bookends appeared in the French periodical.

The New York State Museum’s single bookend, one of the pair, apparently arrived in the institution’s collections sometime between 1915, when five dozen watercolors of birds by Fuertes were presented by Mrs. Russell Sage, and 1977, when the Fuertes collection was transferred from the Museum’s natural history collections to the art collection. Its presumed mate is now in the extensive Fuertes collection at Cornell University. ■

Mountain Gorilla
(*Gorilla beringei beringei*)
Louis Agassiz Fuertes
(1874–1927)
Cast bronze, 1923
8 ¾ inches x 9 inches x
7 ¼ inches diameter
NYSM H-1977.74.121

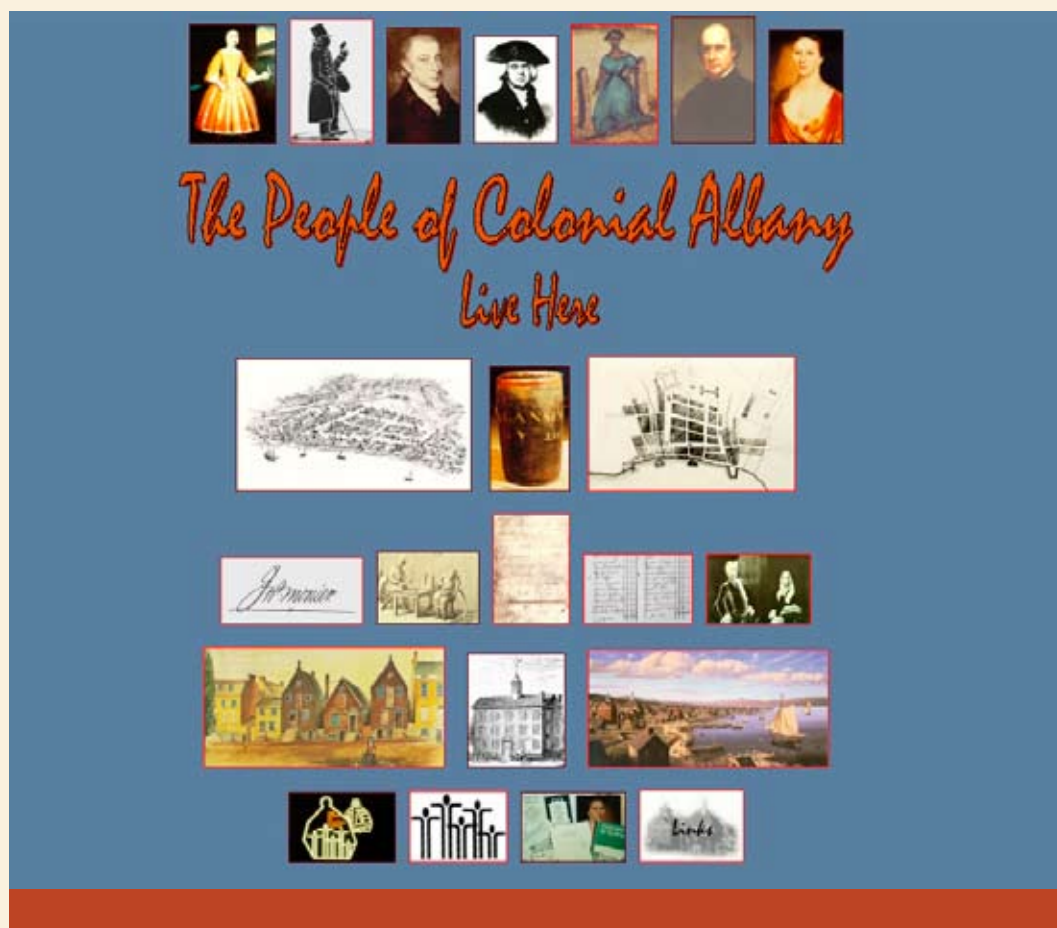
Senior Historian
Ronald J. Burch is
curator of art and
architecture at the
New York State
Museum.

The People of Colonial Albany Live Online



Since 1999, people have been able to visit early Albany via a community history website

BY STEFAN BIELINSKI



The site's gallery page is the gateway to 19 major themes in Albany's early history. Click on each one to go deeper into the community's past.

shared on request, but we were receiving daily queries for more information on the people of colonial Albany and their world.

At the same time, I was beginning to understand that the project had the potential to continue to learn about each person, place, and thing related to the early Albany story. This potential appeared limitless as more and more historical resources were uncovered and became available to inform our work. As the overall program was destined to remain a "work in progress," presenting the information on a website would allow us greater flexibility. We would be able to incorporate new learning about the people, places, other elements of the early Albany story as they were discovered and/or brought to our attention.

Since the project's overall goal is to present a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the lives of the people of colonial Albany and their world, the Internet has become an almost perfect vehicle for us to share what we have learned with the largest possible audience.

During the website's first year, we focused on producing a set of theme essays on important topics in community history (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/gallery.html>). They were supported by interactive biographies, transcriptions of censuses and other historical documents,

Editor's Note: The Colonial Albany Social History Project was begun in 1981 to research and present the lives of Albany residents born before 1801. The website is a work in progress and currently features more than 2,000 biographies of the city's early residents.

The site also includes interactive maps and cityscapes, assessment rolls, censuses, wills and other documents, family histories, and additional information about early Albany and the people who lived there. Stefan Bielinski, the community historian at the Museum, founded and continues to direct this project.

By the end of the 1990s, the Colonial Albany Social History Project had amassed substantial research resources that could be focused on the lives of the people who founded and built the city of Albany. There were more than three dozen printed products, including booklets and pamphlets, articles, how-to publications, maps and lists, bibliographies, popular offerings such as an annual "Women of Colonial Albany Community History Calendar," and copies of more than a dozen works in progress. All these could be

and information on Colonial Albany Project activities and the resources we use. By the end of 1999, the website consisted of about 200 items and was attracting considerable attention from people interested in Albany history. These visitors to the site were not just local, they were historians from around the world.

In the millennial year, the site expanded with the addition of 150 new pages (see <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/new2000.html>). These still were mostly individual biographies that helped illustrate and substantiate my belief that a community's history is the sum of the roles played by its constituent parts (ideally all of the people of colonial Albany). But also in 2000, I added pages on relevant places and things such as Fort Orange/Beverwyck and the Albany Congress (which several thousand people viewed in the month of October alone), nuts-and-bolts information on community history research, and interactive graphical material. Viewers could click on a map, picture, or diagram and link to additional information.

Also in 2000, I added an overall site index, an information page on upcoming programs, and a month-by-month listing of recently posted features. All of these pages included links (more than a dozen clickable words on each page) that led the viewer to more descriptive information and deeper into the world of the people of colonial Albany. I posted versions of some of the more popular of my previously published articles that would address directly and easily many frequently asked requests

and inquiries. I also began to include sections of the *Guide*, the project's comprehensive primer (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/guide/intro.html>) that, since 1984, had provided a framework and detailed instructions for project activities and grown to almost 200 printed pages.

During the early 2000s, I was able to add 20 to 40 new items each month, create internal and external links to new sources of information, and update hyperlinks. I did this while augmenting and correcting existing Web pages with the help of our "users"

and our family of associates — most importantly my research assistant, proofreader, office manager, and trusty sidekick, Joyce Patterson, a staff member since the 1980s.

Layers of Information a Click Away

Since then, the website has grown in many directions and has become a useful tool for literally thousands of visitors, students, and a range of client groups ranging from distinguished scholars to a large number of avocational historians—most

Dinnah Jackson

by Stefan Bielinski

In January 1779, **Dinnah Jackson**, "a free negro woman," purchased a lot on the South side of lower Second Street. That transaction identified her as Albany's first recorded African-ancestry property owner. It also is the first reference to her thus far encountered by the Colonial Albany Social History Project. Although her origins remain unknown, over the next decades, she was one of the more prominent of a small number of **free blacks** living in the city at that time.

We believe that Dinnah Jackson was the wife of "Old Jack" and probably the mother of "Young Jack" - whose holdings on the hillside above Pearl Street were listed on the city assessment roll for October 1779. Both men were more often referred to as "Jack Jackson." Although by that time, some slaves and others of African ancestry were beginning to be noted in the records of Albany's churches, no mention of Dinnah Jackson has been found in these sources before September of 1790 when Dinnah and Jack witnessed the baptism of John Orion. Unfortunately, we cannot determine whether that Jack Jackson was Dinnah's husband or her son.

During the 1780s, Albany's free black population not only began to grow - but also was becoming more prominent in the community's historical record. The assessment roll for 1788 listed only the house of "Widow Jackson and son" in the Second Ward. In 1790, the household of "Jack Jackson," consisting of seven "free people of color" and two white males - also in the Second Ward, accounted for more than 30% of the free blacks in the city. Perhaps counted within that household on the census, Dinnah Jackson was the housekeeper at the nearby Masonic Lodge and also performed domestic chores at **St. Peter's** Episcopal Church.

Over the next three decades, this industrious and frugal widow was able to purchase a number of additional parcels of real estate along the North side of **Forest Creek**, West of Middle Alley, and above the Lutheran Church burial grounds. Real estate transactions recorded between 1779 and 1819 reveal that she owned as many as a dozen pieces of property throughout the city. Although all of these parcels could be called marginal, the widow's determination to own multiple plots of city land sets her apart from her **Afro-Albanian** contemporaries.

The city directory for 1814 included Dinnah Jackson among Albany's prominent people calling her "widow" and listing her residence as 31 Maiden Lane. Subsequent directories have identified her at that location as well. Her modest home would have been just West of North Market Street - probably abutting the corner mansion of Chancellor **John Lansing**. Albany artist **James Eights** remembered her and painted her near her house in one of his classic **Albany street scenes**.

Widowed for almost three decades and having outlived all of her children, Dinnah Jackson died in the summer of 1818. From her will filed that June, some picture of her family and also an inventory of her extensive holdings comes into view. First, her six grandchildren were the only heirs identified. Granddaughter Dinnah received the bed and bedding, half of the household furniture and clothing, monies, five lots in the Fifth Ward (**Arbor Hill**), and a share of another Arbor Hill lot. **Jain (Jane)**, the wife of John Williams, was given the remaining half of the furniture and clothing and half of another lot. Grandson John Jackson was bequeathed a lot on Arbor Hill on his own. Perhaps they cared for their grandmother in her old age. Three younger grandchildren, Elizabeth, Hannah, and Harry, were left monetary bequests.

notes

This sketch of the life of Dinnah Jackson is a prime example of how to reconstruct the story of a person's life without benefit of subject generated resources. As an Afro-Albanian woman, people in her situation are among the most difficult to retrieve - in terms of resources. However, as an "everyday person" on the community margins, a community history would be seriously incomplete without her and the many others in similar situations - in terms of historical resources. Thus we have taken more care in exposing the sources used in reconstruction her life than in most CAP **online biographies**. See also *"The Jacksons, Latimeres, and Schuylers"*.

This image is a detail taken from a watercolor painted by James Eights of how he remembered North Market Street in 1805. The woman shown in the lower right corner of the painting would have been standing in front of Dinnah Jackson's home at 31 Maiden Lane. We believe Eights was recognizing a prominent person from his childhood.

Detail from page 53 of *The Albany Register and Albany Directory for the Year 1815*, compiled and arranged by Joseph Fry (Albany, 1815). The 1815 edition named 2,394 individuals, listed street addresses, and provided some information about occupations. For the first time, the city directory included forty italicized names and explained in the preface that "these persons whose names are in italics are free people of colour." Dinnah Jackson was one of that sizable **Afro-Albanian minority**. See Stefan Bielinski, "The Jacksons, Latimeres, and Schuylers: First African-American Families of Early Albany," *New York History* (October 1996), pp. 373-84.



The biography of Dinnah Jackson, the first Afro-Albanian matriarch, is one of more than 2,000 online biographies.

Albany: An Early American City

In early America, not even a dozen **population centers** were known as cities. But even the largest of them were much smaller than the **cities** today. The center piece image shown below depicts the city of Albany in the year of its chartering and is the central visual resource of the model community history program known as the **Colonial Albany Social History Project**.



In New York State, the first city to be so designated was New York City, which received a royal charter in April 1666. Albany, with a **population** of about 500 people (one-fourth the size of New York City at the time), received its municipal charter from Governor Thomas Dongan three months later on July 22, 1686. The so-called **Dongan Charter** incorporated Albany, fixed its **boundaries**, set-up a municipal government, and endowed the **city corporation** with a number of special rights and privileges.

Albany's essential nature was commercial. Initially, the **community economy** was based on the **fur trade**. By 1686, Albany was evolving into a place where **regional** farmers bartered their crops and forest products for imported and locally crafted items; where they came to have tools and other things repaired; and where they found spiritual and legal guidance. By that time, city people had begun to divide into business, production, and service enterprises - although most early Albanians engaged in some of all three activities. The Dongan Charter further enhanced Albany's status and the **English fort** provided the community with its first great government enterprise.

The fledgling **community** granted a city charter in 1686 was in reality a town of about 120 buildings - clustered together city-style and encircled by a tall, wooden stockade. Seventeenth century Albany had four principal public buildings. The **city hall** was located near the water on Court Street; the **Dutch Reformed Church** set in the middle of the city's main intersection; a smaller **Lutheran Church** which often was without a pastor; and a more imposing wooden **fort** located up the hillside and overlooking the community.

In 1686, most of the people of greater Albany County lived within a clear day's sight of the flagpole at Albany's fort. Population center, entrepôt, service provider, and the only safe place on the northern frontier, **Albany** had emerged as the **local point** of settlement in the upriver region of New York.

notes

The major "urban centers" in colonial North America were Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Quebec, Charleston, Newport, and Albany. In 1789, Albany was the sixth largest city in the United States. In modern terms, a city is a place where a large number of different people associate themselves to live together, provide the services, and generate useful products. City people are joined together in a community of interest. Although proximity and self-sufficiency are much less essential than in the past, today most Americans live in or near a city. In New York State, sixty-two communities of interest are officially chartered cities.

This theme essay (at left) illustrates the physical growth and development of Albany during its formative years.

Colonial Albany Live Here Web Site" includes more than 3,000 individual items. Features range from interactive biographical profiles, sketches, and notes to publications such as the entire project guide and chapters from *The Other Revolutionaries* (an in-progress book on groups of Albany people during the American Revolution). The more than 2,000 biographical entries represent about half of the individuals among our overall community population whose lives had become historically significant. Interactive transcriptions of more than 200 probate documents (chiefly wills and estate inventories), descriptions of more than 200 important places and things within the city and beyond, and about 50 linked maps, diagrams, paintings, and drawings are also available. Each of these items is considered to be in-progress and all are destined to be augmented and improved whenever possible.

At this point, I believe that the website is perhaps half complete. My hope is to more than double the offerings in each category in the years to come. The design and presentation no doubt will evolve as well. However, my focus remains on adding profiles of people and other features relating to the early Albany story in the most user-friendly and most accessible ways possible. These human and descriptive elements are the basic tools or building blocks of the community mosaic. That wish may be difficult to realize. But it is and remains my hope and passion. Then I, for one, will be able to realize my original intentions and ambitions as a community historian—to tell the story of people and community in the early Albany setting and to make it available to everyone 24/7/365! ■

The website presents a view of Albany that is based on the experiences of the community's actual residents. It is fundamentally different from previous scholarship based on the published observations of outsiders.

significantly genealogists. The website presents a view of Albany that is based on the experiences of the community's actual residents. It is fundamentally different from previous scholarship based on the published observations of outsiders. Much of what they had said about Albany cannot be readily reconciled with the community-based portrait that has emerged from the research conducted by the Colonial Albany Social History Project. The interactive Web format enables me to address the published impressions of outside observers more directly.

First, I created a chronological "access page" entitled "Visitors to Albany" (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/res/visitors.html>) and then began to link to online versions of the actual historical observations. Wherever possible, I decided to faithfully copy the Albany-related passages directly to our website so they would be available for study. The mid-18th-

century Albany-related observations (14 paragraphs) of Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/art/kalm.html>) are the best known example, and they were selected from the text of a two-volume work. To accommodate the addition of new research, the development of the "Visitors" page is open-ended and ongoing.

Additional transformed versions of historical manuscripts and printed documents now number more than two dozen. For example, these describe community events such as the fire of 1793, or the travails of Sheriff Abraham Yates, Jr. during the 1750s, or the city "Laws and Ordinances" as published in 1773. They are clicks away from the relevant webpages, or you can quickly find these by with a Internet search or by consulting the formal website index. (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/pcalhindex.html>)

Currently, "The People of

Senior Historian Stefan Bielinski is the founder and director of the New York State Museum's Colonial Albany Social History Project. This is his 40th year at the New York State Museum.

Up in the Air:

Aerobiological Discoveries at the New York State Museum

BY DR. NORTON G. MILLER

The former New York State Botanist, Dr. Eugene C. Ogden (1905–2001), was an early leader in the field of aerobiology—the study of biological processes and particulates (especially pollen and spores) in the atmosphere. Every hay fever sufferer knows that allergies are triggered by contact with airborne pollen and fungal spores, and thus the importance of aerobiology in human health.

Pollen is produced in the flowers of trees, shrubs, and herbs, and in the cones of conifers. In many, pollen is released into the air and moved about by wind. Pollen often differs in its structure among plant species, and when

distinctive it can be identified by microscopic examination. Using compound microscopy, these differences allow pollen to be identified, even when it is found dispersed and at a distance from the parent plant. Spores produced by non-flowering plants and fungi also have distinguishing morphological features.

In the early 1950s Dr. Ogden led a statewide study of atmospheric pollen and spore load, during which daily samples at 35 stations between Montauk Point and Lockport, Ogdensburg, and Binghamton were taken and counted. This work established growing-season abundance patterns of pollen and spores

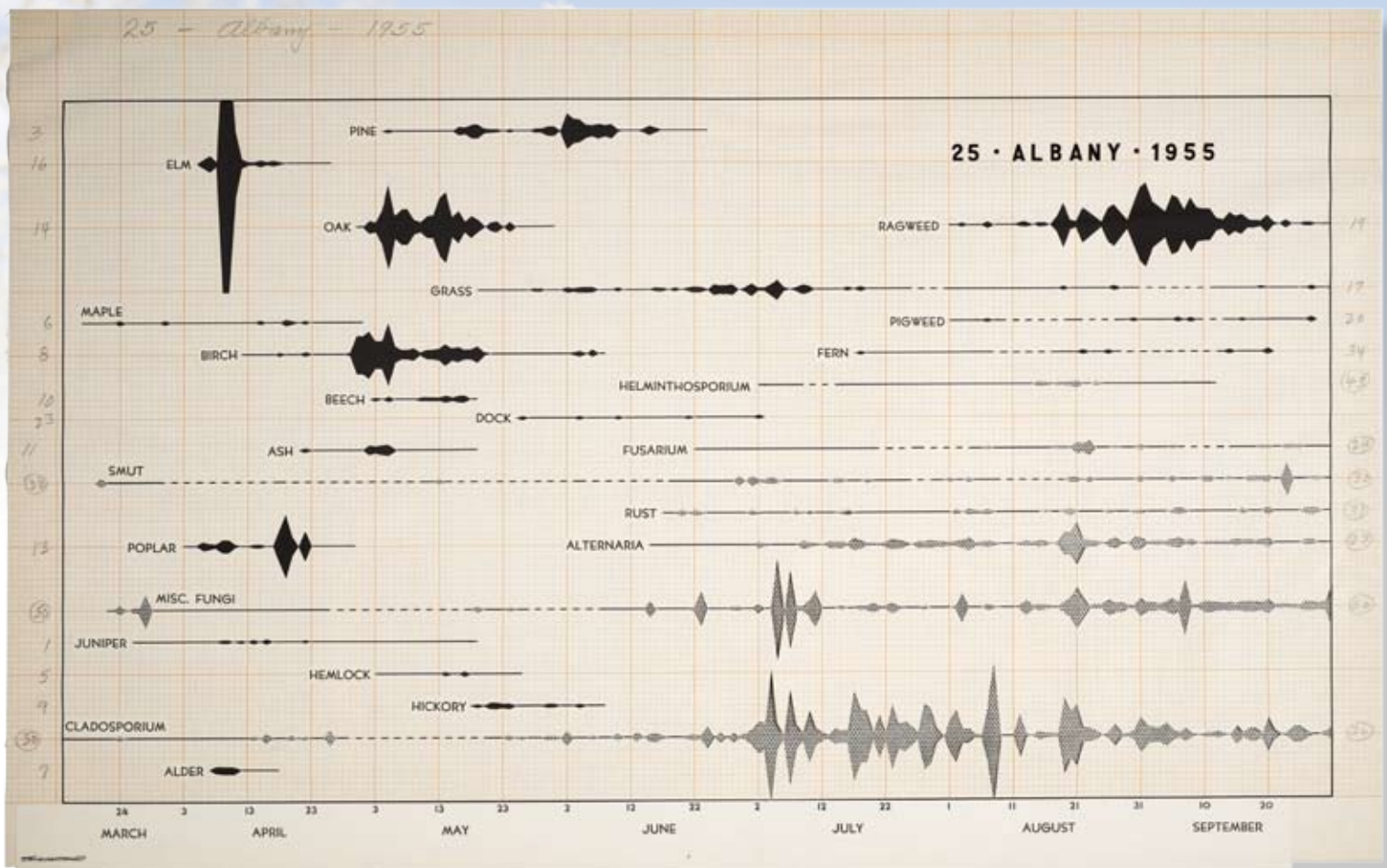
released into the air. The published results continue to serve as reference points for growing-season counts that are reported daily to the public.

Ogden later expanded these studies into an informative series of experiments performed with meteorologist Gilbert Raynor. Ogden, Raynor, and their associates, including Donald Lewis and other State Museum staff, adapted field sites and towers originally designed for radiation studies at Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island to document pollen dispersal characteristics. The experiments used small-area source plots of living plants or stained pollen grains



Impact samplers (two per pole) and a planted stand of timothy as the pollen source at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Dr. Norton G. Miller is curator of bryology and curator of Quaternary paleobotany at the New York State Museum.



Graphic depiction of variation in pollen and spores trapped over a seven-month period in Albany, New York, in 1955. Trees, shrubs, and herbs are the black silhouettes; fungus spore variation is shown in the patterned silhouettes. The greater the silhouette height, the larger the number of pollen or spores recorded. For example, in 1955 grass pollen in Albany appeared in May and continued to be recorded through September, with maxima in June and July.

Some of the information gathered in these studies was later used in the development or the testing of mathematical models of pollen dispersal in forest, field, and mixed settings. Such models are now much used in the interpretation of pollen assemblages extracted from sediment in lakes and other natural traps that have been receiving pollen since the end of the Ice Age.

released from point sources. They confirmed that ragweed (*Ambrosia*) releases pollen starting an hour or two after sunrise, with a peak a few hours later, and then a decrease during the afternoon; whereas in the grass, timothy (*Phleum*), pollen shed begins during the night, peaks a few hours after sunrise, and declines during the rest of the day. Such patterns go far to explain why pollen sufferers can be worse off during one part of the day than another and may find relief during the evening.

Ogden and co-workers used Brookhaven tower arrays to investigate pollen and spore concentrations at different heights above source plants and at increasing distances from them. They also studied the amount of pollen filtered through different types of

vegetation, such as hedgerows and pine forest. They found pollen concentration decreased rapidly during airborne dispersal, with timothy pollen attenuating over a distance of a few hundred feet horizontally and 25 feet vertically in fields under summer weather conditions. Some of the information gathered in these studies was later used in the development of mathematical models of pollen dispersal in forest, field, and mixed settings. Such models are now used in the interpretation of pollen assemblages extracted from sediment in lakes and other natural traps that have been receiving pollen since the end of the Ice Age. These assemblages are evidence of changing vegetation in response to plant migration and post-Ice Age warming. This is where my

investigations of ancient pollen as signals of paleovegetation and paleoclimate intersect the results of Dr. Ogden's work. Lake basins of different sizes and the type of surrounding vegetation have varied pollen trapping characteristics and therefore pollen content. The models developed by Ogden's team, using contemporary experimental simulations of natural pollen dispersal, help explain the differences.

All this work would not have been possible had Eugene Ogden not been a born tinkerer and gadgeteer. Dr. Ogden was not satisfied with the standard pollen traps in use at the time, so he developed a completely new kind. His improved sampler collected 500 percent more pollen. The new sampler was also efficient at sampling the medically important pollen. These important discoveries helped modernize studies of airborne pollen and spores.

Several decades of this work was summarized in *Manual for Sampling Airborne Pollen*, by E. C. Ogden, G. S. Raynor, J. V. Hayes, D. M. Lewis, and J. H. Haines, which was published in 1974 in New York City by Hafner Press. This summary influenced the further development of aerobiology and continues as an important reference. Ogden's pollen and spore collections, plant-voucher specimen backups, and examples of traps he and others developed are preserved in the New York State Museum. ■

Right: An array of tall towers in field and pine forest at Brookhaven National Laboratory, Long Island, with a plot of ragweed plants as the pollen source. This arrangement was used to test ragweed pollen movement upward and downwind above and through a forest. Samplers were placed at several heights on each tower.

Below: Dr. Eugene Ogden testing different types of pollen and spore samplers in ragweed plots at Brookhaven National Laboratory, Long Island, in the early 1950s.



These male and female Karner blue butterflies (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*), from the State Museum's entomology collection, measure approximately 1 inch in wing expanse.

Dr. Timothy L. McCabe is the State Entomologist and curator of the entomology collection at the New York State Museum. His research interests focus on the natural history of caterpillars as well as their evolutionary history and relationships.

The Karner Blue Butterfly

BY DR. TIMOTHY L. MCCABE



The Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*) was first discovered in Canada near London, Ontario, by William Saunders in 1861, and near Albany (Karner), New York, by Joseph Lintner in 1869. Lintner was employed by the New York State Museum and was New York's third state entomologist. Vladimir Nabokov, famous author of the novel *Lolita*, also studied butterflies and described the Karner Blue as new to science in 1943. This butterfly disappeared from Canada in the early 1990s and was federally listed as

Endangered in the United States in 1992.

The Karner blue is restricted to a special kind of dry, sandy habitat where its only caterpillar foodplant, Wild Blue Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), grows. Similar sand plains occur along major rivers in northeastern North America. These well-drained eastern sands mimic prairie conditions where annual precipitation is much less than in the East; such sands harbor many prairie relicts [relictual species are those that were established under different environmental conditions occurring long ago]. ■

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close-ups



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Clockwise from top left: Life-size fiberglass cast of *Coelophysis* skeleton, *Ancient Life of New York*; Surveying instrument from the 1896 Buff and Burger Transit in the Colvin Signal Tower, Adirondack Hall; Model of the Schooner *Marble Head*, by Carl N. Fuller, Port section of New York Metropolis Hall; Wooden decoy of a Canada Goose, Market Hunting exhibition, Open Spaces section of New York Metropolis Hall.