

How a City Worked: Occupations in Colonial Albany

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This essay addresses the theme of how a city worked. In this case, appreciating the play on words in the title holds an important key toward understanding the development of an urban character and urban identity for the city of Albany, New York during its colonial period from 1686 to 1776.

To date, most studies of colonial cities and particularly the scholarship focused on early Albany either have described community events, traced the evolution of local institutions, or have offered the careers of the most outstanding personages as the best ways of understanding the founding, growth, and development of what, in the case of Albany, was a trading station, a military outpost, a commercial and communications center, and then a seat of government and service on the west bank of the Hudson River, 150 miles north of Manhattan.¹

This essay applies a functional framework and employs a humanistic approach toward the understanding of life in an early American community. The city of Albany was a home for as many as 10,000 different people during the century before the War for Independence. Each of these Albany residents played a part in the community's socio-economic drama. Appreciating the individual and collective contributions of each of the people of colonial Albany represents a comprehensively revealing approach to community history. To know intimately the lives of each of these people of colonial Albany and to understand how individual life histories worked as parts of a larger story of family and community over a period of approximately 114 years is the ambition of the Colonial Albany Social History Project, a model community history program sponsored by the New York State Museum. The Colonial Albany Social History Project has undertaken a broadly conceived program of historical research and has developed several data base information centers on the people of colonial Albany and their world. The central element of this data base is a detailed life course biography for each of the people who lived in the city of Albany before 1800. These biographies are the essential building blocks of all project-related programs. In sum-

mary, the Colonial Albany Project seeks to illuminate and focus the life story of early Albany through the prism of the lives of each early Albany person.

No aspect of the lives of these people is more significant than their contributions to the pre-industrial community's economy. That is, how they supported themselves and their dependants—how they worked. This essay will focus on the working people of colonial Albany and will draw on the work profile data collected so far by the Colonial Albany Social History Project to suggest an outline occupational framework for pre-urban workers in pre-industrial America.

These laborers, artisans, craftspeople, transporters, human services vendors, merchants and traders, and professional people gave this colonial city its character, its identity, and its life. An appreciation of how the working people of colonial Albany earned a living is basic to understanding issues that led to the chartering of the colonial city in 1686; how Albany grew over the next hundred years; how its political economy functioned in practice; and how its people related to their neighbors, a large dependant hinterland, transient populations, and to other parts of the outside world.²

Before submitting this outline, an appreciation of two basic concepts is essential. These definitions help provide a framework for understanding why the city of Albany flourished and how the lives of its people differed from those living in the Albany hinterland. First, this essay defines an "Albany person" as a resident of the city of Albany, the one mile by sixteen mile strip of land running northwest away from the Hudson as specified in the city charter granted by Governor Thomas Dongan in 1686. The center of this municipality was the land enclosed by the Albany stockade, a log fence which was enlarged several times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most, but not all, Albany residents lived inside the six gates. The distinction of city residents from those living in the countryside is critical to appreciating the development of the regional economy on two levels.



Fig. 26. Early Albany Street Scene by Leonard F. Tantillo.

By the date of the charter, these “city” people had formed an image of themselves as members of an Albany community. Their special status confirmed in the Dongan Charter was tangibly important to them with respect to their land titles in an area otherwise surrounded by Van Rensselaer Manor, their exclusive right to trade for furs, and the other privileges connected to city residency. Albany people were distinguished from other regional residents by their occupations, which unlike the others, did not revolve around farming.

Albany residents made, sold, and repaired things and also provided a range of personal services. Only qualified Albany city residents, called “burghers” or “freemen,” were authorized to trade with the Indians. All others, and there were many, were liable to be condemned as illegal traders. In practice, this restriction seriously impeded non-resident, would-be traders, whether they were from New York, New England, or more immediately from Rensselaerswijck, Kinderhook, Catskill, or Schenectady, from openly purchasing Indian trade goods and from selling competitively the furs they might illegally receive from the Iroquois and Eastern Indians. This reservation also placed these outsiders at risk of being arrested by the Albany County sheriff who with the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs (the

city’s mayor and aldermen), was responsible for protecting the Albany fur trading monopoly. Some enterprising individuals sought to maintain dual residencies and thus qualify as traders. But the Albany city fathers (the mayor and aldermen) were successful in almost completely eliminating that practice by the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century.³

The Albany city charter also established Albany as the county market town and designated regular market days when farmers could bring their produce to Albany to barter for goods and services offered by those Albany residents enjoying the “freedom of the city.” Only those entitled by freemanship or licenced by the Albany corporation (the mayor and councilmen) were permitted to sell their wares at the Albany market. At the same time, internal carting and portering, and ferry access to Albany were controlled by appointment and license by the city corporation. Finally, the mayor was empowered as “clerk of the market” to set commercial standards including weights and measures, and, through the Mayor’s Court, to arbitrate business disputes. This legislation meant that access to the market and the movement of goods and supplies across the Hudson and within the city was reserved to those preferred by the Albany city fathers.

Not surprisingly, both the fur trading monopoly and the rights and regulations of the Albany market were violated and infringed on by non-residents. However, unauthorized traders and merchants (anyone who had not qualified for the "Freedom of Albany") often were prosecuted and fined. Those who persisted were compelled to carry on in some degree of secrecy. Thus, they were at a serious disadvantage when competing with the legally established Albany traders and merchants. These Albany *Handelaers*, the Dutch word for merchants, who were prominently represented on the Albany Corporation and in the local courts, successfully employed legal sanctions to curtail competition.⁴

Second, by establishing the city of Albany as the exclusive commercial center for the county that originally extended from Saugerties to the St. Lawrence and from New England to the Indian country, commercial opportunities for the inhabitants of the rest of the region were confined to agriculture and to extractive enterprises. These farmers were permitted to grow and harvest agricultural products and to cut, cure, and otherwise prepare produce and forest and mineral products for sale on the Albany market in accordance with the terms of their individual land titles.

Freedom to "mine" the land did not, however, extend to animals. According to the city charter, hunting for commercial purposes in the woods north, east, and west of Albany was permitted only under license by the Albany corporation. This requirement was enacted to plug loopholes in the fur trading monopoly. However, it also impacted on who could bring game meat for sale in the Albany market. An appreciation of the legal separation of economic activity into "commercial" for the freeholders of the city of Albany and "agricultural" for the inhabitants of the rest of the county is essential for comprehending the nature of work in the Hudson-Mohawk valley.⁵

A second concept essential to understanding how the colonial city worked concerns the most typical Albany business unit—described here by the term "family economy." Until the latter part of the eighteenth century, colonial Albany was a city of households with most of the substantial buildings in the community housing a family group. At the same time, business activities were carried on in most of these homes. Generally, the commercial (beyond subsistence) business of an Albany house-holder encompassed several activities and typically involved all the members of the nuclear household

excepting infants and invalids. Wives took over management of these enterprises during the absence or death of the head of the household, adding additional responsibility to childbearing which lasted for up to two decades. Most widows of childbearing age remarried while those who had reached middle age often managed the family trade or business themselves and did not remarry.

Children generally outnumbered the adults in the community as the typical Albany household included four or more sons and daughters. Childhood ended early as boys and girls had been introduced to crafts, trade, business, and above all, to labor, by the time they reached their teens. Few children left their parents' hearth until they married during their early twenties. Thus, the family work unit would retain its basic labor supply over all but the first years of an Albany householder's career. Virtually every Albany youth aged ten to twenty could expect to pass five to fifteen years of work, training, and seasoning in a family business enterprise. In this city of households characterized by a family-based economic unit, wives, sons and daughters, a large number of orphans, and some adolescent apprentices formed the backbone of the community's labor supply.

For the most part, the head of the family was acknowledged in legal and other public transactions and activities. However, spouses, children, the elderly, other kin, slaves, servants (most commonly apprentices), and sometimes lodgers and boarders who worked for their keep, typically co-operated in the commercial enterprise or enterprises of the house as members of the family economy. The unacknowledged/unrecorded contributions of wives and unmarried sons and daughters permitted the head of the household/business to leave the house/shop for sales, supplies and stock, and to engage in other external activities.

Until the War for Independence when the homes of widows, gentlemen, and purely residential dwellings became noticeable on city assessment roles, most Albany households were functional—that is business activities ranging from wood and metal work to retail trade to food and comfort service activities and every permutation of the above, were carried on under the same roof that housed an Albany family. In fact, only large-scale operations like brickmaking and sawing, extremely disagreeable processing operations like tanning, hazardous activities like smithing and others that involved fire, and those requiring water were practiced in yards, pits, shops,

and mills detached and/or located away from an Albany dwelling house.

From the 1650s on, trades and craftsmen, vendors, and other business people often rented rooms in city residences from both widows and from regular families. This further complicated the functional definition of the early Albany home. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the subletting of rooms in Albany townhouses was wide-spread and helped open the community to Scottish and New England newcomers. In summary, each person living under a single Albany roof contributed to the wealth or standard of living of the household. The terms "household" and "family economy" were synonymous and most fairly describe the typical early Albany dwelling.⁶ Having defined the Albany resident and the family economy of Albany households, this essay now will consider the specific elements of the Albany work force.

Traders, Merchants, and Vendors

Because of its location, its trading post, and its fort, the general site of the city of Albany was a center of independent population from the early days of New Netherland. Despite the preventive efforts of the West India Company and the intentions of the first proprietor of Rensselaerswijck, settlers gravitated to the flood plain north of Fort Orange throughout the New Netherland era. These people were attracted by the lure of the fur trade—the most important single economic consideration until the latter part of the century. The traders built frame, then brick and limestone homes along the river road and up the slope north and west of the fort and sought to barter for furs. By the eve of the English takeover in 1664, Beverwijck—the name given to this fur trading community in 1652—had developed its own core group of about fifty major traders and another eighty less prominent entrepreneurs who were struggling to channel and control the flow of furs into Beverwijck/Albany and out to Manhattan and beyond. This trading group was composed of former Van Rensselaer tenants, discharged West India Company employees, and a sprinkling of French-heritage settlers, Scots, and others from New York and from New England. Most of these traders were at the peak of their careers, having been born in Europe earlier in the seventeenth century—mostly after 1620. Each of these emigres came to America with work experience, although not necessarily in business. Prior to setting up in Beverwijck/Albany, each trader had supported himself in a craft, trade, or with his strong back.

These Beverwijck/Albany residents found that the fur trade provided an attractive, if short-lived, vehicle for upward mobility. As the beaver had been trapped out of what became New York State by about 1660, the European fur market also began to ebb toward the close of the Dutch colonial era. By 1700, the fur economy was in terminal decline. Half a century later, ten Albany merchants still could be identified as Indian traders. However, this group was a highly specialized minority within the Albany business community and consisted of the most adept and aged, die-hard members of Albany's traditional trading families except for the two actual frontier traders who also resided in the Indian country. In addition, other less obvious Indian traders were characterized as Albany merchants who sent representatives to Oswego during the summer trading season.⁷

As the fur trade declined during the second half of the seventeenth century, Albany fur traders were required to adapt their business energies and substantial experiences to more viable areas of opportunity. By the end of the century, not even the most successful of the fur traders relied exclusively on the beaver for their livelihood. Those who maintained hegemony now relied on export-import commerce involving a variety of commodities taken in trade from their customers. They also had diversified into real estate investment, shipping, processing, credit relationships, and other investments and enterprises. Those who could not accommodate the passing of the fur trade were forced to leave Albany. The survivors and particularly those who flourished over the next century as Albany merchants were distinguished by their flexibility. Some of the fur traders were able to adapt to new conditions and opportunities and became merchants who offered a traditional range of imported staples and manufactured and crafted goods to a growing American-born population and also to the expanding body of new settlers of greater Albany County—which had become the most populous in the province with over one fourth of New York's total population by the eve of independence.

Because of its location at the hub of transportation access and egress, the protection of its fort, a favored economic status granted by the city charter, and the already-established commercial climate within the community, Albany was destined to grow as a center of business on the northern frontier. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Albany-based retail trade was much more complex in nature and sophisticated in practice than the simple bartering for furs. A successful

import merchant was required to comprehend international sources of goods, the colonial commodities market, credit and currency exchange, the needs of the city resident and the frontier settler, the requirements of colonial armies, and the workings of existing delivery systems.

By the 1680s, Albany's leading merchants were the sons of New Netherland settlers, most of whom were born in the community during the 1640s and 1650s. These astute, Dutch-heritage businessmen were joined through marriage by a few enterprising newcomers, like Robert Livingston. They were able to dominate Albany's economy based on their personal ties to the body of the new city's population.

The names of Bleecker, Cuyler, Lansing, Roseboom, Schuyler, Ten Broeck, and Wendell were found at the top of Albany merchants' petitions, on the rosters of local government, on city assessment and contract lists, and most often on census rolls as well. For the next three generations, these New Netherland ancestry groups were the most prevalent as well as the most prominent early Albany families. Not until the 1760s was the Albany Dutch mercantile oligarchy substantially eroded by true outsiders. Two decades later, the Scots who survived the War for Independence and a larger number of New Englanders had taken control of the city's business life, sending many Dutch-ancestry merchants to their country estates, where they managed their acreage, and continued buying and selling in a less competitive atmosphere.⁸

Many of those who formerly had trafficked in furs were unable to compete and were forced to fall back on their original occupations, to leave the province entirely, or to move out of Albany to a more rural area (Schenectady, Kinderhook, Schaghticoke, and beyond), where business was less competitive and where some success in trading was more certain. Others, specifically the non-resident traders from New York, New England, and those who sought to maintain a foothold in Albany while remaining established elsewhere, were deprived of adequate real estate within the stockade, frozen out of cooperative import-export opportunities, or were litigated out of the fur trade by the Albany court.⁹

The passing of the fur trade and the exodus of the non-resident trader from the city had taken place before the Treaty of Utrecht was signed in 1713. That event marked the beginning of three decades of peace which

represented a period of significant growth and development for the city and its economy. By that time, the successful business-oriented Dutch families of Albany had adopted the retail trade. Through succeeding generations, these families would provide both the typical and most outstanding examples of the core of an Albany mercantile community. Successful in business, holding extensive acreage in the greater region, elected and appointed to leadership positions, and having kinship ties to most families in the city and its hinterland, these merchants constituted the most prominent feature of the city's economic life for the remainder of the colonial period.

Throughout the colonial period, the merchants of Albany had been a powerful and cohesive force in the economic and political life of the city, the county, and in the province as a whole. The most important of the Albany merchants were permanent residents of the city. They owned Albany town houses from which they carried on business and trade; were counted as Albany residents on census and voting enumerations and on assessment rolls—where they paid the highest taxes; held city and county political and judicial offices; belonged to Albany churches; and were known to neighbors and outsiders as Albany people. The most successful maintained family-based business contacts in Boston, New York, elsewhere in America, and abroad. Although the external networks were critical to an importer's success, most of the Albany merchants were not simply stringers for New York City mercantile houses. Instead, they conducted independent commerce often involving personal trade with the British Isles, the West Indies, and the other colonies.

These Albanians led internal development in their city through an intimate involvement in the city government. Every Albany merchant served as either an alderman or assistant on the city common council which supervised and regulated all aspects of Albany's development including its commerce. With the mayor, these councilmen also served as justices and as commissioners of Indian Affairs. Each year, leading Albany merchants were appointed by the royal governor to the offices of mayor and recorder. Almost to a man, the mayors of colonial Albany were drawn from among the city's principal merchants.¹⁰

As a group, the merchants petitioned, lobbied for, and received commissions, land patents, and other special privileges from the royal government in New York City.

They secured contracts to build, repair, and supply Albany's fort, and also served as sub-contractors for the military expeditions sent against the French during Queen Anne's War, King George's War, and the Seven Years War. These contracts often were lucrative and, when an Albany merchant received such preferment, many Albany people shared in the wealth. More than one Albany family managed to make a fortune in the tricky business of outfitting colonial regiments and the British army. Albany victualers were able to sublet the provisions of their military contracts to associates and relatives who made shoes, hats, and clothing, supplied food items, or to other Albany artificers who were builders, woodworkers, smiths, and wheelwrights. Such patronage provided a real boost for Albany's tradespeople and helps account for the concentration and vitality of a large and diverse skilled labor force in the city. The prosperity generated by the military contracts also fostered a unifying spirit among the general members of Albany's business community, that only began with kinship.¹¹

Military and civil contracts are a public testimony to another widespread Albany business activity. After the retail merchants who dealt in externally produced, imported goods, Albany contractors either provided personal services, marketed local produce and agricultural products, or else sold the things made or produced in Albany—either personally or by their neighbors. These self-contained producer/merchants were known as vendors.

Most Albany vendors both made and sold products ranging from food to clothing to implements to finery. Occupational categories were fluid, and these individuals often were comfortable in several distinct yet related roles. Depending on demand, the availability of labor and materials, the stage of an individual's career, and the season, vendors might be more or less makers or sellers at any particular moment. Thus, the specific allocation of a vendor's time eludes precise definition. In fact, the vendor himself often was in conflict deciding whether he was a gunsmith or a merchant, or a vintner, tavernkeeper, or wine merchant. When transportation considerations became part of the commercial activity, which often happened with Albany vendors owning sloops, sleighs, wagons, and draught animals, a definite categorization becomes even more complicated. However, a large number of Albany people who made things or provided services also sold the same goods and skills.¹²

After the 1750s, Albany's business community became more closely articulated as newcomers and, to a lesser degree, established merchant/vendors, began to specialize in discernible item areas. Some were identified with some consistency as retailers of liquor, clothing, or tools. Others advertised imported staple goods for sale. Still others called themselves apothecaries or tobacconists. After the War for Independence, these smaller-scale, general merchants came to be identified as shop-keepers.¹³

As prominent, powerful, and prosperous as Albany's trading community was throughout the colonial period, the story of its contribution only partly reveals how and why the city really worked. Undeniably, the lion's share of Albany's political power and wealth resided with a mercantile establishment composed of resident traders, merchants, and vendors. This general group of Albany merchants formed patron-client relationships with a large number of people in the community and throughout the region. At the same time, the hand of the Albany merchant was present in virtually every type of community economic activity. But, by the eighteenth century, Albany had outgrown its original purpose as a trading entrepôt on the northern frontier. The mid-century observations of the Scottish physician, Alexander Hamilton, and Peter Kalm, which form the historical basis for many of our impressions of colonial Albany, suggest that the people there cared only about trade. Such impressions, however, are superficial and seriously distort the overall occupational picture. By 1756, those engaged primarily in some kind of trade represented no more than one-fourth of Albany's heads of households. Trade was only the most obvious, best advertised layer of a substantial and complex occupational structure. The following sections describe the body of that iceberg.¹⁴

Processing

From the earliest days, the people who settled at Albany relied on the abundant and conveniently located natural resources, turning them into products to feed, cloth, and shelter them and their rural neighbors. The bounty and accessibility of the natural environment were important contributing factors in Albany's success. However, all of these resources required processing. The transformation of clay into bricks and tiles, logs into lumber and potash, crops into grain and beverages, and animal matter into meat, clothing, and staples were production activities that took place within sight of the Albany fort.

Each mill, yard, kiln, or pit required two or more workers. A significant proportion of the Albany work force (especially those considered as part of a family economy) was involved in processing. Newcomers, unskilled laborers, part-timers, and slaves were employed in processing enterprises. However, sawing, milling, tanning, curing, and other processing activities often were space intensive, required water power, were fire and sanitation risks, and aesthetically were not compatible with community living. These considerations dictated that processing activities be practiced outside the Albany stockade.

A number of mills served the people of the Upper Hudson during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Because the city of Albany was the regional population center and because many of the mill owners were prominent Albany merchants, mill sites would be expected to be located in close proximity to the city. However, saw mills and grist mills were more characteristic of the Normanskill, Beaverkill, Patroon's Creek, the rural streams of the region. Even though the angle of flow increased as the stream neared the Hudson, only one water mill, namely that of Rutger Jacobsen, was ever erected on the lower Rutenkill or Vossenkill, the streams that flowed through the heart of the city. The Wendell mill upstream on the Rutenkill was located in today's Lincoln Park, away from the core settlement.

Tanning pits were situated on the upper part of the Vossenkill. By the second half of the eighteenth century, an ashery was erected near where the stream flowed under North Pearl Street. Beginning in the seventeenth century, several owners operated a brickyard on the plain above today's South Pearl Street. However, space pressures later relegated larger-scale brick baking to the river level north of the stockade. By the close of the eighteenth century, this north Albany area was a sprawling lumber district and also the site of building supplies deposits, tar and potash pits, and other storage facilities.

Smokehouses, breweries, smithys, cooperages, and leatherworks were numerous and vital to the emerging regional center. These facilities had been located in the heart of the seventeenth century community. But, as home became separated from work place and a central business district became discernible from a locus at the Dutch Church, such processing facilities also were moved to the fringe areas of the city adjoining the pastures south of the stockade and out North Market Street (Broadway) toward the Van Rensselaer manor house.

Processing enterprises often were owned by Albany merchants who employed workmen and engaged an overseer. By the second half of the eighteenth century, wage laborers and slaves had replaced tenants and apprentices as operatives. The homes of the workers if not the owners of processing operations began to form residential neighborhoods north and south of the core settlement which spread out from State Street, Broadway, and North Pearl Street. By the eve of the War for Independence, these lowland enclaves in the South End and in North Albany were already defineable transient/low-income residential areas whose modesty stood in contrast to the extensive and elegant estates of the Schuylers, Ten Broecks, and Van Rensselaers that loomed over them from the west.¹⁵

The Building Trades

Using local contractors, the English built Fort Albany at the head of State Street in 1676. Even before the granting of the Albany city charter in 1686, artisans had been engaged by local government to build, repair, and supply Albany's public buildings, streets and bridges, and to maintain its protective stockade and associated blockhouses. In addition, over a thousand homes were built within the city limits by Albany tradesmen before 1800. Throughout the colonial period, a constant and substantial volume of building-related activity in Albany proper supported a large and broadly constituted group of artisans who served government, their neighbors, and the residents of Albany's large dependant hinterland as carpenters and joiners and as stone and brick masons. In addition, these tradesmen were supported by an infrastructure of sons and helpers, apprentices, slaves and other servants, and, after 1750, by itinerant laborers. Together, these builders constituted the largest individual segment of Albany's workforce. Until the War for Independence, when other trades began to exhibit dramatic growth, those engaged in heavy construction constituted at least a quarter of the city of Albany's working population. However, that large proportion is somewhat misleading as carpenters, for example, simultaneously were engaged in lumbering and in making specialized wooden items such as barrels and crates, shingles, sleighs, wagons, and wheels.¹⁶

Crafts

Coopers, smiths, and shoemakers were the most prominent members of a broadly based community of craftsmen at work in colonial Albany. Although almost three dozen distinct crafts activities have been identified, Albany's artisans generally can be described as those

who made, adapted, and repaired utilitarian items made from either wood, metal, animal products (leather), or cloth/fabric. Until after the War for Independence, the only significant fine or distinctive products were crafted by Albany's silversmiths, a small number of artisans the best known of whom were members of the Ten Eyck and Lansing families.

At any given time before 1776, at least a dozen Albany coopers produced barrels and casks that were used for storage by regional processors and for shipment by Albany merchants. Although the cooper carved and bent wood, his craft also entailed the procurement of suitable lumber and metal hoops. This interdependence sponsored flexibility as the names of Albany coopers often were connected with house and boat building, carving and other woodwork, smithing, and lumbering. As a rule, Albany cooperages were located along the riverfront area and near storehouses and breweries. By the end of the era, the cooperage, with its pile of aging lumber, often was separate from the cooper's residence. Although Albany supported a large number of barrel makers, none of Albany's coopers achieved prominence. However, with the smiths and shoemakers, these tradesmen formed the core of colonial Albany's workforce.

Other wood craftsmen included gunstock and other handle makers, ship and boat builders, wagon and cart makers, turners, and wheelwrights—who combined wood and metal working skills. These more specialized tradesmen were not as numerous as the coopers but they also flourished as colonial Albany became more firmly established as the regional service center.¹⁷

The smith provided basic metal work and repair services from the earliest days of the Albany settlement. This group of tradesmen included blacksmiths, gunsmiths, other "smiths," saw, hoop, and other more specialized "makers," braziers, and general tinkerers. Typically, as many as two dozen of these metalworkers owned Albany smithys while several other Albany residents were empowered by the Commissioners of Indian Affairs to practice their trades in the Indian country. By the eighteenth century, fire safety considerations called for the smithy to be separate (if only detached) from the smith's home. Smithys often were located near Market-Court Streets in North and South Albany. Each Albany smithy was owner-operated and employed one or more assistants who maintained the fire, performed heavy labor, and otherwise supported the smith. The smith's trade was more lucrative than the cooper's and graduated

an occasional city aldermen and more assistants during the colonial period. Because a large part of his business was devoted to repairing broken metal items, the blacksmith was in constant demand. Like the gunsmith, he often was employed by the city corporation to repair the Albany infrastructure and to fix broken guns, tools, and implements brought in by the Indians. This service function laid the foundation for an extensive network of tinkerers that emerged in Albany after the War for Independence.¹⁸

The tanning pits ringing the colonial city prepared the animal hides that supplied Albany's leather workers. These artisans made shoes, boots, leather clothing items, saddles, and leather belts, bags, sashes, and laces. Shoemakers were the most numerous and also the most highly specialized of early Albany's crafts activities. Shoe shops typically were attached to the artisan's residence and were small, most often training a son and employing only an occasional journeyman or apprentice. However, as many as two dozen shoemaking establishments were counted in the city by the British army in 1756.

General shoemakers were the most prevalent ranging from traditional shops passed on for generations by Albany families to individual rooms rented from Albany widows by newcomers and young men. These artisans made and repaired footwear for everyday use and also offered speciality items such as belts and caps as a sidelight. Cobblers basically repaired leather goods with thread, thong, and glue, although most sold some rough-crafted items as well. Cordwainers made and sold more finely cut and stitched "cordovan" shoes and boots to Albany's more affluent customers. These elite craftsmen took pride in the distinction between cordwainer and the common shoemaker or cobbler, sometimes offered imported crafted goods, and sought to imitate the fashionable in their designs.

Sadlers, harness-makers, beltmakers, and other leather workers made, sold, and repaired transportation-related leather goods and supplies. At any given time during the century prior to 1776, Albany could support one each of these craftsmen who, with the ropemaker, provided most of the software for the regional workforce. During the 1760s, Abraham Eights established a sailmaking business that prospered on the Albany waterfront and made and repaired sails for use all along the Hudson River as far as New York where his work was advertised in Manhattan newspapers.¹⁹

By the 1720s, former soldiers from the British garrison had settled into Albany as weavers and tailors and began to fill out an embryonic textile and clothing community that had been evident since Beverwijck days. By mid-century, Albany's clothing-related enterprises were booming and presented a fully articulated occupational structure. Ten or more weavers supplied cloth; a dozen general tailors cut and stitched fabric; and a few britches-makers, hatters, and a "mantua" or cloakmaker provided more specialized clothing services. In 1756, almost two dozen households were identified as engaged in these clothing trades. Cloth-related activities were labor-intensive and provided prime examples of the family economy at work as women, children, aged parents, boarders, and some wage earners were employed on Albany looms or spent prickly hours spinning and stitching in Albany sewing rooms. For the most part, this cottage clothing industry supplied common clothing and provided alterations for the city and regional population. However, many Albany merchants offered cloth and clothing shipped in from outside. The volume and variety of fabrics and clothing items offered for sale by Albany importers continued to increase throughout the colonial period.²⁰

Food Services

Located in the heart of an extensive drainage basin teeming with fish and waterfowl, surrounded by game-rich forests, and set in the heart of a fertile and emerging agricultural region, colonial Albany was ideally situated to turn a profit from the preparation and sale of food. Most colonial Albany families engaged in some subsistence gardening, dairying, fishing, foraging, and hunting. Under the city charter of 1686, hunting in most of the county had been reserved exclusively to city residents and to those licensed by the Albany corporation.

However, the people of colonial Albany were able to do better than merely survive. Many Albany households were able to reap additional benefit from the sale and/or exchange of prepared food items. The preparation and sale of meat, foodstuffs, and drink, represented another large and traditional enterprise that was familiar to a large proportion of the colonial Albany work-force. The constant need for food in a non agricultural community had been met by house gardens and by Albany bakers, butchers, and brewers since the mid-seventeenth century. The people of colonial Albany also owed their well-fed lifestyle to the external demand for food items created by the fur trade, the constant military presence, and Albany's location at a commercial and cultural

crossroads and central place. Albany bakers and brewers learned at an early date that Native American fur traders could be plied with food and drink during barter negotiations. Contrary to many ordinances against it, Beverwijck and later Albany traders kept sweets and spirits on hand—sometimes baking or brewing the hospitality items themselves. As the fur trade declined and the region began to fill up with settlers, many of these baker/brewer/fur traders were able to stay in the community by baking and brewing food and drink for their neighbors, travellers, and for other regional residents. Although many Albany families performed their own meat cleaning, cutting, and curing, several butchers offered these services and also sold meat, poultry, and fish products. However, until after the War for Independence, evidence of commercial fishing or fish/mongering to date has been more fragmentary than might be expected.²¹

Taverns and Inns

After the church, and ranking alongside the court and the city market, taverns were popular places for the men of colonial Albany to meet, exchange information, propose and broker, and to argue and settle old debts. Undoubtedly, a large proportion of colonial Albany's work-related agreements were negotiated over a measure of beer. Unlike the church, the court, and most other community focal points, attendance at the tavern was recreational and also elective. These facts made Albany's taverns extremely popular and bred a vitality and energy in tavern life often lacking on court day and the Sabbath. The colonial tavern served locally-brewed beer and often had evolved from a room in an Albany trader's home where he conducted business. Food and beverage service represented a logical next step in hospitality. These informal gathering places were numerous, as many Albany homes were referred to as taverns at some time during the years before 1800. Tavern business rose and fell in importance on a seasonal basis. Taverns often were operated by widows and by family members other than the head of the household. In the long run, these factors made most Albany taverns unsuccessful as businesses. Their short lives had shown them to be casualties of other business and household priorities, competition from more-committed establishments, and of inconsistent responsibility in business practice.

The Albany court and, after 1686, the city corporation sought to regulate brewing by licensing tapsters and also those who served "wyne Rumm, Beer or other Liquors"



Fig. 27. J. Berckheyde, 1630-1693, "The Baker"
 Courtesy of the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

in quantities over five gallons. Coupled with the decline of the fur trade, these conditions and restrictions forced some Albany entrepreneurs to reconsider the wisdom of dividing their business energies. By the eighteenth century, most of the brewers, merchants, and tradesmen who had tried to run a tavern as a sideline, closed their tap rooms and concentrated on their principal businesses in an effort to remain solvent in the community. At the same time, the most committed Albany tavern owners experienced the most success. By 1700, the taprooms of Thomas Williams, William Hogan, and several other

Albany tavern locations had become established and would survive for several decades.²²

In the early days of the community, travellers and longer-term visitors found lodging in the homes of Albany residents. As the fur trade became more competitive, however, Albany fur traders and later the city corporation might be excused for not encouraging outsiders to stay around lest they succumb to the temptation of attempting to trade for furs. However, with the building of Fort Albany, establishment of the court,

Indian commissioners, and other regulatory bodies during the 1670s, those other than Albany residents could have legitimate business within Albany's stockade. Albany's emergence as a service center dates from this period and many early Albany people were experienced in service-related enterprises.

By the close of the seventeenth century, the most successful Albany taverns had evolved into inns which offered lodging, meals, stables, and other personal comforts to non-residents in addition to the traditional beer for all. Like the taverns, the inn was a family enterprise employing members of the innholder's household, slaves, and other workers but on a larger scale and in more specialized roles than at the tavern. The inn was among the largest employers in the pre-industrial community requiring up to a dozen individuals to prepare and serve food and drink, maintain lodging quarters, provide stable, valet, and custodial services, and to manage the enterprise day and night. Under the Albany charter, inns came under the regulation of the city corporation. Licenses were required and standards were established. By the 1750s, over a dozen inns and taverns were counted in the city by the British army. Several of these were prominent Albany landmarks that also hosted meetings and less formal gatherings. By that time, many young men were patronizing Albany tap rooms on a regular basis. On these occasions, native sons would affirm peer relationships, interact with older members of the community in a less rigid, social setting, and be exposed to new plans, fashions, and ideas put forth by recently arrived soldiers, sailors, teamsters, and travellers.²³

Transportation

Because of location, the prosperity and utility of its business community, and the presence of the English fort, throughout the colonial period shipping and transportation services were concentrated at Albany. Until after the War for Independence, most long-distance cargo transport was by water and thus was suspended during the winter months from December through March. Some Albany people owned sleighs but their cargo-carrying ability was limited.

The water-borne and overland carrying trade of commodities, products, and travelers between Albany and other destinations involved sailors and shippers operating from a variety of home bases. The people of colonial Albany played a major but by no means exclusive role in the carrying trade to and from their community. However, in the upriver transport business,

Albany possessed several advantages. By the eighteenth century when the community began to be less dependant on imports for life necessities, Albany merchants could set the cycle and rhythm for exporting wheat, other grain, furs, and lumber by controlling the means for transporting their goods downriver. Consequently, a number of Albany merchants owned outright or in partnership most of the sloops and some of the lesser watercraft that carried their commodities down the river. These vessels were manned and maintained by kinsmen, slaves, and other local boys and young men—often on a part-time or short-term basis. Although some Albany boys chose sailing as a career option, most had settled into a regular, community-based trade, craft activity, or became farmers in the countryside by the time of their marriages. Managers and pilots rather than crew members accounted for most of the water-related occupations of Albany people after they reached adulthood. However, the water-oriented nature of work in this colonial community should not be underestimated as many of Albany's men could recall some sailing experience or had worked along the waterfront in days past.²⁴

The Albany corporation controlled access to the city by virtue of its authority over the riverfront and its exclusive right to regulate the Hudson River ferry. By the mid-1760s, the common council had authorized the construction of a sea wall along the city's riverfront that featured three docks. This public works achievement, which allowed ships to be moored and cargoes loaded and unloaded directly instead of being canoed or rafted to a muddy shore, professionalized Albany's traditional role as a river port and also provided investment and employment opportunities across the city's economic spectrum. Wharfage and docking rights were franchised by the corporation—which in practice gave Albany insiders almost exclusive access to loading and unloading facilities. By that time, Albany merchants were able to capitalize on renting portions of a dock or wharf space, owning warehouse facilities, or sharing in ownership of a sloop, yacht, or other river craft.

The Albany corporation appointed an official city porter who was invested with the right to hand-carry bulk cargoes for hire through Albany's streets. However, as a practical matter, a single, designated porter could not have met the internal demand for this type of labor alone and would have been more suited to courier service. Loading and unloading, repacking, warehousing, and the movement of cargo items to and from the bank and dock area required substantial if not constant amounts of heavy labor.

While the first sons of Albany families might be learning the principles of business, a craft, or a trade during their adolescence, their younger brothers often started work on the Albany waterfront or as tenant farmers. These services typically were in demand and labor scarcity was a constant lament among would-be entrepreneurs. However, heavy labor was arduous, not steady, and was abandoned as soon as other opportunities became available. Until the latter part of the eighteenth century, only a small portion of the city's adult work force could be characterized as laborers. Most Albany house-holders managed to practice or at least attend a trade or craft; or process natural materials into products; or gather firewood, loose lumber, or other materials as contractors of the corporation, the fort, or one of the region's land magnates. Thus, they would be able to vend a commodity or product instead of simply hiring out their own physical resources.

A final work option preferred over manual labor made young men tenant farmers and relocated them out of the community. Albany employers sought to fill the labor gap with part-time help in the persons of off-duty soldiers, slaves, with emigres from the countryside, and with immigrants from Europe. However, the shortage of labor represented a chronic problem throughout the colonial period.²⁵

The city charter insured that overland access to Albany and also internal transport would be in the hands of Albany people. Charter privilege and city by-laws authorized five licensed carters as the exclusive haulers of cargoes within the city limits. Over the years, additional legislation set fees and tied the carters to community activities by requiring them to perform civic responsibilities such as street repair and "dirt" or garbage/trash removal.

Carters held a virtual monopoly on internal trucking and the corporation reported no difficulty in finding solicitous licensees. Typically, these favored transporters employed their sons and others who carted cargoes and supplies up and down Albany's hillside lanes and along the streets to and from local storehouses. The small cart was the only commercial vehicle permitted to operate within the city stockade. Some Albany carters also owned larger wagons that carried loads to the farmers on Castle Island, to the Normanskill, to Niskayuna or the Half Moon, or out to Schenectady, eighteen miles to the west. Because water-carried cargoes were unloaded at Albany, the community's

porter, carters, and Albany wagonners were positioned to have the best opportunities to move goods inland. However, the poor quality of local roadways retarded Albany's ability to participate in overland transit. After the War for Independence, road building facilitated land transport and permitted some development of Albany's road transport industry. By the end of the century, several Albany trucking firms had become established, although not on the scale that would allow them to compete successfully for State stage line charters and transit contracts.

Charter privileges regarding development, licensing, and franchising gave the Albany city fathers practical control of commercial access to Albany (which had widespread regional applications), and control of transportation development within the community as well. However, like other commercial operations, the actual trucking was only a part of the overall community involvement. Albany carpenters and wheelwrights made the carts and wagons. Albany blacksmiths fashioned the iron fittings. Albany tanners supplied the leather. Albany shoemakers and saddlers outfitted the horses and draught animals. Albany coopers made the wooden casks and shipping crates. Albany carters and wagonmasters owned and drove the teams and each employed a few Albany teamsters. At the end of this activity chain were the laborers who loaded and unloaded. A large proportion of the city's work force was engaged in making, servicing, and operating carts, wagons, sleighs, and rudimentary coaches. Albany's overland transport enterprise was substantial and complex and its broadly based social infrastructure helps illustrate the function of the colonial community as a transport service center.²⁶

Human Services

As the major population center within a hundred mile radius, Albany had a concentration of people who provided social services in the upriver region of colonial New York. Medical treatment, formal education, vocational training, legal services, spiritual comfort, and any specialized needs ranging from the expertise of an apothecary to the art and needlecraft of a tailor were found most consistently if not exclusively in the pre-urban center of Albany. At any given time during the eighteenth century, the city of Albany served as the home base for several lawyers, physicians, schoolmasters and tutors, and ministers. Although these professionals together numbered barely a dozen men, their unique talents and perspectives provided a kind and quality of

leadership missing from the elite rolls of the surrounding communities.²⁷

Conclusion

By the close of the colonial era, Albany had become the most populous county in the province of New York. Natural increase and a healthy influx of newcomers especially after 1750 fueled the development of a large agricultural and resource harvesting region that needed service, supply, capitalization, and above all, a convenient and attractive market place. Over the foregoing century, the settlers of this region had been able to find necessary services at the traditional county seat. This center was defined by Albany's fort, commercial establishment, municipal and county governments, transportation facilities, and support services. As the merchants provided leadership, Albany artisans proved willing and able followers. Most numerous among colonial Albany's adult working people were those engaged in crafts and trades. Sustained by their neighbors and kin, well-developed regional market outlets, military and Indian contracts, and protected in their enterprises and investments by a local government controlled by insiders, the city's artisans, craftsmen, and other producers constituted the broad foundation of Albany's world of work.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, a large number of Albany residents were prospering in the building trades—carpenters, smiths, and masons; processors including brick and tile makers, lumbermen, and tanners. Other prosperous tradesmen were metal workers—gunsmiths, silversmiths, sawmakers, and tinsmiths; clothiers—weavers, hatters, tailors, wigmakers; and leather craftsmen including shoemakers, cobblers, and cordwainers. Food and drink was prepared by Albany butchers, bakers, and brewers, while meals and spirits were served in Albany inns and taverns. Albany-made and repaired goods and services were offered to local, regional, and outside markets via a water and overland

transport system created and controlled by Albany merchant/traders.

Central location, transportation access, the sanction of government, and a responsive and dynamic regional economic framework are factors critical for the success and livelihood of a community. The business history of colonial Albany provides well-developed examples of each of these physical characteristics. However, the contributions of community leaders, traders, transporters, professional people, artisans and craftsmen, and those providing labor and other services represent essential human requisites for the success of any community. By the end of the colonial period, the people of colonial Albany had established a variety of social bases for the city's success. These rested on a foundation of flexibility and service. The heterogeneous nature of activity in this central place was made possible by the diversity of the talents and ambitions of its people. Although rarely having over three thousand residents at any time during the period, colonial Albany clearly possessed a range and quality of human resources and activities that justify calling it a city.

The Colonial Albany Social History Project seeks to shed new light on life in early America by studying the lives and comprehending the contributions of those who lived together in the focal community of a major colonial region during its formative period. In this social history, we have presented an overview and outline of the economy of a pre-industrial city by profiling the work force of colonial Albany. This essay is intended to be suggestive rather than definitive and is offered as a guide to the structure and dynamics of work in the upper Hudson Valley. As the research undertaken by the Colonial Albany Project over the next decade continues to flesh out the life histories of each of the people of colonial Albany, we will be able to appreciate more fully the breadth, depth, and significance of the work experience in an important antecedent of the American city.

Notes

¹Since 1970, our understanding of life in early American communities has been transformed by an extensive literature now known as "town studies." Outstanding examples of this genre are Robert A. Gross's *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976), an engaging account of the politicization of revolutionary Concord, Massachusetts; Stephanie G. Wolf's *Urban Village: Population, Community, and Family Structure in Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1683–1800* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), a fascinating, intensive social portrait; and Stephen Inness *Labor in a New Land: Economy and Society in Seventeenth Century Springfield* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), which raises the issue of "class" in describing the economic relationships in a Massachusetts frontier town. *Labor in a New Land* also is a prime example of community study through the eyes of its founders, in this case William and John Pynchon. Outstanding examples of this literature are surveyed by Stefan Bielinski in "Issues in the Formation and Development of Communities in Pre-Industrial America: A Historiography" (1985), unpublished paper on file in the office of the Colonial Albany Social History Project (CASHP), 3093 Cultural Education Center, Albany, New York 12230.

The scholarly work focused directly on colonial Albany is less voluminous. See *Sources on the People of Colonial Albany: Narrative Sources* (Albany: Colonial Albany Social History Project, 1985), a comprehensive bibliography of publications on the colonial community and its people. The most recent, comprehensive descriptions of life in colonial Albany appear in Bielinski, *Government by the People: The Story of the Dongan Charter and the Birth of Participatory Democracy in the City of Albany* (Albany: Albany Tricentennial Commission, 1986), esp. chapter III; and Bielinski, "Becoming American: An Essay on Leadership in an Early American Community" (unpublished M.A. thesis, State University of New York at Albany, 1986), a biography of Dirck Wesselse Ten Broeck, a seventeenth century Albany fur trader and political leader.

²The 10,000 figure approximates the number of people who lived in the city of Albany between 1686 and 1790. During that time, Albany's population grew from about 500 to the 3,140 reported in the first Federal census. Each of these people is the subject of a life course study undertaken by the CASHP. However, the city's "effective population" for this period (in terms of its work force) was less extensive and can be appreciated by understanding that half of the 10,000 figure represents women who (with some notable exceptions) were engaged in

activities other than those which led the community's market economy. The bearing and rearing of children and the running of the household demanded most of the energy of women under the age of fifty. Those women who engaged in business, crafts, trades, and commercial service activities stood out in the historical record and are considered part of the Albany work force. Of the 5,000 to 6,000 potential "workers" remaining, at least half of that number can be eliminated from the effective work force because they did not live long enough to make a noticeable contribution to the community's market work activity. The death of infants and children constitutes an important limiting factor for pre-industrial populations. The rough rule for the colonial Albany population is that half of those baptized died before they were old enough to marry. This infant and child mortality rate declined only slightly from Albany's frontier days through the end of the colonial period.

³The Albany city charter issued on July 22, 1686, currently resides at the Albany County Hall of Records in Albany. The provisions of the so-called "Dongan Charter" are printed in *Colonial Laws of New York from the Year 1664 to the Revolution* (Albany: James B. Lyon, 1894), I: 195–214.

The trading rights of Albany residents and the composition of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs are explained in Bielinski, *Government By The People*, chapter V. The sale of house lots owned by non-resident traders during the 1670s and 1680s is chronicled in volumes I and II of *Early Records of the City and County of Albany and Colony of Rensselaerswyck*, translated by Jonathan Pearson and edited by Arnold J. F. Van Laer, (Albany: J. Munsell, 1914–1916). The passing of non-resident fur traders can be perceived by comparing the lists of Albany's heads of households made in 1679 and 1697. The "List of the persons who are to keep in repair the posts set around the town fence. . ." dated March 5, 1679, identified 146 Albany householders and included almost two dozen individuals whose principal residence was not within the Albany stockade. At least ten of these men had come from New York or Boston to qualify as fur traders by maintaining a seasonal residence in Albany, *Minutes of the Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck, and Schenectady, 1668–1685*, translated and edited by Arnold J. F. Van Laer, (Albany, 1926–1932), II: 396–97. By the census of 1697, all of the New York and Boston traders were gone and the only non-Albany people counted among the 174 heads of families were Schenectady refugees and a few farmers who lived just outside the north and south gates, "New York Colonial Manuscripts," New York State Archives, XLII: 34. The

mayor, recorder, aldermen and assistants were constituted under the city charter as the "Albany Corporation." From the beginning, they could be characterized as the community's principal fur traders.

⁴For the Albany market, see *Colonial Laws*, I: 206–8. The records of the first two decades of the Albany city council contain frequent references to the city's ambition to protect its market rights. See "The City Records," Albany County Hall of Records, also printed by Joel Munsell in *Annals of Albany* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1850), II, 38–143.

The standard source for "freemanship" remains Samuel McKee, Jr., *Labor in Colonial New York, 1664–1776* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1935), 33–36, 45, 52–54. During the eighteenth century, Albany freeholders were "qualified" or enumerated at different times to guarantee their voting, jury, and economic rights. See, for example, the lists of Albany city freeholders for 1720, printed in *Documentary History of the State of New York*, edited by Edmund B. O'Callaghan (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1849), I: 241–42; for 1742, printed in *Annals of Albany*, II: 186–88; and for 1763, in "John Tabor Kempe Papers," New-York Historical Society.

See *Colonial Laws*, I: 207, for the establishment of the mayor as Clerk of the Market. On the protective measures employed by Albany merchants, see David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York: 1686–1760" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965), chapters II, VI, and the sources cited therein, especially the "City Records."

⁵The boundaries and enabling legislation for Albany County in 1683 are printed in volume I of *Colonial Laws*, 221–23. For the agricultural communities surrounding Albany, see Samuel G. Nissenson, *The Patroon's Domain* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1937), for Rensselaerswyck; for Schenectady, Thomas E. Burke, "The Extremest Part of All: The Dutch Community of Schenectady, New York, 1661–1720," (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Albany, 1984; forthcoming from Cornell University Press); and R. Beth Klopott, "The History of the Town of Schaghticoke, NY, 1675–1855," (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Albany, 1981), which describes the early days of an Albany satellite. For a more regional perspective, see Sung Bok Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York: Manorial Society, 1664–1775* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1978). "Hunting" restrictions are specified in the Albany city charter printed in *Colonial Laws*, I: 211.

⁶This section on the "Family Economy" is informed by the biographical case studies being compiled by the CASHP. The CASHP data files document numerous outline examples of this general pattern. In fact, most early

Albany households exhibit elements of the family economy model at some time during its life history. The features of the Albany household continue to be more clearly defined as research progresses.

⁷On the rise of Beverwijck and for a case study of a successful fur trader who maintained his leadership position by making several transitions, see Bielinski, "Becoming American," chapters I–V, and also "The People of Colonial Albany, 1650–1800: The Profile of a Community," in *Authority and Resistance in Early New York*, edited by William Pencak and Conrad Wright (New York: New York Historical Society, 1988), 1–26.

The standard sources for the fur trade are Allen W. Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1960), and Thomas E. Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686–1776* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1974). Armour's "Albany Merchants," is the most informative study of the Albany fur traders. For the large and small traders and the decline of the fur trade, see Thomas E. Burke, Jr., "The New Netherland Fur Trade, 1657–1660: Response to Crisis," *De Halve Maen*, LIX/3 (March 1986): 1–4, 21; and reprinted in this volume. Statements regarding Indian traders during the mid-eighteenth century are based on an analysis of the lives of those identified as "Indian Traders" on "A List of the Inhabitants of the City of Albany . . . as it appeared on a street Enquiry made in November 1756" for the Earl of Loudoun, then British commander-in-chief in America "Loudoun Papers," Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, L03515.

⁸Diversification into landholding represents a favored investment opportunity for successful early Albany trader/merchants. The concept has been considered generally by several authors including Allen Trelease, David Armour, Georgiana Nammack, and Sung Bok Kim. The "Real Property Archive" under development at the CASHP is charting not only the city property but also the external landholdings of early Albany residents. See Bielinski, "Becoming American," chapter VII, for a case study of Dirck Wesselse Ten Broeck's transitions from trade through politics to the land. Albany traders were well-represented on the major regional land partnership petitions of the late seventeenth-early eighteenth centuries. These grants included: The Kinderhook Valley Patent (1680), Saratoga Patent (1683), Schaghticoke Patent (1697), the so-called Dellius Patent—which was disallowed by Governor Bellomont, the Westenhook Patent, Fort Hunter Patent, and the Kayderosseras Patent.

Of the 175 households identified on the 1697 census, nine were named Schuyler, seven named Wendell, and five Roseboom, while the Lansings, Cuylers, and other prominent merchant families joined them as multiple

households on subsequent surveys. The women of these families further extended familial ties when they married. A majority of the people of colonial Albany belonged to approximately one hundred family groups. The majority of that majority were members of about twenty families. For the Scottish and New England merchants, see Bielinski, "The Profile of a Community," in *Authority and Resistance in Early New York*, notes 26 and 27.

⁹On outmigration and population evolution, see *ibid.*, *passim*, and Bielinski, "Coming and Going in Early America: The People of Colonial Albany and Outmigration," *De Halve Maen*, LX/2 (1987): 12–18. The names of these outmigrants make up the rosters of the settlers and early inhabitants of Schenectady, Kinderhook, Catskill, Schaghticoke, and other Albany satellites. See above, notes 2 and 5, and Bielinski, "The Profile of a Community," 20, note 8.

¹⁰In "The Merchants of Albany," David Armour has studied traders and businessmen of the region but without regard to their actual residence (that is: Albany city or elsewhere). That approach hampered consideration of the special status and cooperative advantages enjoyed by Albany city merchants. Clearly, as officers of the municipal and county governments, of the courts, as Commissioners of Indian Affairs, as successful petitioners for frontier acreage, and as leaders of local social organizations ranging from the churches to the militia, the city-resident Albany merchant possessed many advantages. All but two of the first thirty mayors of Albany fit the merchant profile. Albert Ryckman (1702) was a brewer/vendor and Robert Livingston, Jr. (1710) was characterized as a "gentleman."

¹¹For a textbook example of transitions in an Albany merchant's career, see Bielinski, "Becoming American," chapter VII. I am indebted to Thomas E. Burke for first pointing out the multiple/collateral/transitional occupations of the Albany fur traders.

Merchants made the most frequent and numerous submissions for reimbursement and for payment of accounts to the Albany Corporation, "City Records," *Annals of Albany*, II, III, V, VII–X. For military contracts, the last published treatment is Lawrence H. Leder, "Military Victualing in Colonial New York," *Business Enterprise in Early New York*, edited by Joseph R. Frese and Jacob Judd (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1979), 16–54, and the sources cited therein. Also, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: Univ. of the State of New York, 1921–65), thirteen volumes, presents a detailed chronicle of the range of activities of regional Indian and military contractors during the mid-eighteenth century. See, for example, the index entry under "clothing," XIV: 123–26. A large number of accounts are included in the "New York Colonial

Documents" at the New York State Archives. The CASHP has begun to collect copies of these manuscripts for analysis. Over a dozen account lists involving Albany people appear in volume 42 alone. See also the ledger entries reproduced in *An Account of Her Majesty's Revenue in the Province of New York, 1701–1709*, edited by Leo Hershkowitz, Julius M Bloch et al (Ridgewood, NJ: The Gregg Press, 1966).

¹²The diversity and fluidity of occupational designations have been revealed by comparing the occupations used to identify Albany residents over the course of his work career in court, probate, government, church, and military records, in newspapers, and in literary sources. Albany's merchants/traders/vendors are particularly distinguished by their for multiple occupation titles. Shoemakers, tailors, and those in food production provide outstanding examples. However, a combination of significant production and commercial activities under one roof was much more common before 1750 than after.

¹³Admittedly, a claim for occupational specialization after the mid-eighteenth century may be biased by the availability of an increased variety of sources and by the development of an advertising mentality among publishers, printers, and the businessmen themselves. However, a narrow articulation of product lines is not a characteristic of seventeenth and early eighteenth century Albany business. Although the first use of the terms "storekeeper" and "shopkeeper" appears during the 1750s, these small merchants made their initial significant impact on Albany business during the 1780s.

¹⁴Alexander Hamilton, *Gentleman's Progress: The Itinerium of Doctor Alexander Hamilton*, edited by Carl Bridenbaugh (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1948); *The America of 1750: Peter Kalm's Travels in North America—The English Version of 1770*, revised from the original Swedish and edited by Adolph B. Benson (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1937, revised edition, New York, 1966), I, 342–43. "A List of the Inhabitants . . ." "Loudoun Papers," Henry E. Huntington Library.

¹⁵[Ed. note: For evidence that Rutger Jacobsen erected a small water mill behind his house on the lower Rutenkill which bears his name (Rut) see Gehring, *Fort Orange Court Minutes* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 223n.] Processing activities in colonial Albany and its hinterland are being studied by the CASHP. This and the following sections on occupations is based on a study of the information collected from the sources described in "The People of Colonial Albany: A Community History Project" (a current edition is available on loan from the project offices), see especially 28–83, which describes each source and the volume and types of information found. In addition, historic maps

have supported the charting of processing enterprises. Copies of all known seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth century maps and diagrams are held at the CASHP offices. Research in these sources has been underway since 1981 and will continue over the next decade. Originally, the findings presented by the author at the Seminar in 1981 represented learning as of the summer of that year. For publication several years later, some revision and updating was essential. The statements made in this essay reflect some of the information collected, analyzed, and integrated by the CASHP thru 1986. However, "How a City Worked" is intended to provide an overview of occupations rather than a close study of each activity. The study of occupations in general and of processing and extractive industries in early Albany will continue to be a focal point of the CASHP research.

¹⁶The idea and need for a typology of pre-industrial occupations first was suggested by Stephen Innes in a paper entitled "Economic Dependency and Social Authority in Seventeenth Century Springfield," presented at the annual meeting of the organization of American Historians in 1978. Publication of his *Labor in a New Land*, (especially 72–122), in 1983 provided structural guidance. Also, we were instructed by the framework appearing in Gary B. Nash's *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), 387–91.

However, the need for a more closely articulated and Albany-relevant occupational outline has remained. This essay represents a first step in addressing that need. Here, we have categorized market work activities and have suggested an organizational framework for occupations based on the sources examined to date by the CASHP.

¹⁷For an overview of pre-industrial trades, see Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* (New York, 1950; reprint Univ. of Chicago Press/Phoenix Books, 1961). For silvercrafting, see Norman S. Rice, *Albany Silver, 1652–1825* (Albany: Albany Institute, 1964). A basic primer on woodworking is Brook Hindle's edition entitled *America's Wooden Age: Aspects of its Early Technology* (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1975). Assessment rolls and property records have been particularly helpful in the identification and location of cooperages in the riverfront areas. No Albany cooper was elected to the position of alderman or rose to any measure of economic prominence during the colonial period.

¹⁸The gunsmiths's accounts submitted to the city Corporation during the 1690s document the volume and range of metalwork practiced in the community, "New York Colonial Manuscripts," New York State Archives, XXVII, 160–93, translated by Arnold J. F. Van Laer. In

1756, the inventory of households identified eleven blacksmiths, five gunsmiths, two braziers, a sawmaker, and wagon and wheel wrights, "A List of the Inhabitants . . .," "Loudoun Papers," Huntington Library.

¹⁹The location of tanning pits, particularly along the Foxes Creek [Vossenkill], is well documented in "the City Records" printed in *Annals of Albany*. Our understanding of the tanning operation is indebted to Lucius F. Ellsworth, "The New York State Tanning Industry to 1900," (1971), an unpublished manuscript in the collection of the CASHP. With distinctions typically separating cordwainers, shoemakers, and cobblers, leatherworkers were the most closely articulated of Albany's crafts. This section is based on census, probate, and church records. For Abraham Eights, see CASHP life-course biography #7800 and its documentation file.

²⁰This section is based on sources described in note 15 and particularly on "A List of the Inhabitants . . ." "Loudoun Papers," Huntington Library. Widows sometimes were identified as weavers, tailors, and as the practitioners of more specialized cloth-trade activities such as cloak making.

²¹The people of colonial Albany generally appear to have devoted the best part of their work energy to commercial and market-oriented economic activities. However, subsistence agriculture, and the preparation of food, clothing, and shelter for internal consumption were basic and ongoing needs that occupied much of the community for much of the time. The research design of the Colonial Albany Social History Project supports the collection of information that will document the extent and breadth of community subsistence activities. Also, the CASHP seeks to learn the extent of Albany's dependence on its hinterland and on imports. Albany's well developed "food chain" and regional networks were basic reasons for the success of the city of Albany and deserve substantial emphasis. However, this essay differentiates between subsistence (internal consumption) and commercial (profit-oriented) activities, and focuses on the latter.

²²This section is based on the types of sources cited in note 15 and particularly on Albany town and "Mayor's Court" minutes and on the records of city government. A large number of different tavern and taproom locations are noted in these sources and in the real estate records described in the CASHP "Guide-1988," 65–72, 80–81, 92. For Thomas Williams and William Hogan, see CASHP life course biographies #6326 and #4396, respectively.

²³Examples of tavern regulation appear in the printed "City Records" and in "By-Laws of the City of Albany" for 1686 in the "New York Colonial Manuscripts," New York State Archives, XXXIV, and printed in *Annals of Albany*, VII, 171, 173. "A List of the Inhabitants . . .," "Loudoun Papers," Huntington Library. This section on

the social nature of tavern life is based on information taken from town and Mayor's Court records, associated legal depositions, the "City Records," and literary sources. Beverly McAnear's edited account entitled "The Albany Stamp Act Riots," *William and Mary Quarterly*, IV (1947), 486-98, provides examples of the descriptive value of these types of resources.

²⁴This section on transportation is informed by the types of sources described in note 15.

²⁵Development of the Albany waterfront, the economics of docking and storage rights, and the leasing of the Hudson River ferry are chronicled in "The City Records" for the eighteenth century printed in *Annals of Albany* and *Collections on the History of Albany*, and in manuscript in the "Common Council Minutes" and associated documents for the years before 1800 held at the Albany County Hall of Records. Waterfront development is illustrated graphically in the Robert Yates map of 1770 and the Simeon De Witt map of 1794. Copies of these and other relevant map resources can be inspected at the CASHP offices.

²⁶Legislation relating to city carters is printed in "By-Laws," for 1686 printed in *Annals of Albany*, 172-73 and in "The City Records" covering the entire colonial period. Graham Russell Hodges, *New York City Cartmen, 1667-1850* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1986), is a comprehensive study that presents outstanding discussions of the mechanics of the carting operation and of economic issues in early American labor history.

²⁷By the end of 1986, the CASHP life course biography files had been established for each member of the colonial city's medical and legal professions, clergy, and for many of the school teachers. A number of these people were college educated. For the most part, these were the sons of Albany's leading residents. Most of the other professionals had studied or worked with that leading practitioners of their day. Although the professional sub-group numbers fewer than a hundred individual Albany residents, the value of the informed and sometimes enlightened quality of their contributions should not be underestimated.