

WINDOWS ON THE CITY
LOOKING OUT AT GRACIE'S NEW YORK

*A Curated Reinstallation of Gracie Mansion's
Official Rooms on the 35th Anniversary of the
Gracie Mansion Conservancy*

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*We treasure this opportunity to look back,
in order to move forward.*

**MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO
and FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY**

OCTOBER 2015

In 1799, a prosperous New York merchant named Archibald Gracie built a country house overlooking a sleepy, scenic bend in the East River, five miles north of today's city limits. More than two centuries later, Gracie Mansion is a historic treasure in the heart of one of the world's largest and most vibrant cities. It is one of the oldest surviving wood structures in Manhattan, a member of New York's Historic House Trust, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Financial hardship caused in part by the trade barriers of the War of 1812 forced Gracie to sell his house in 1823 to Joseph Foulke and his family. In 1857, Noah Wheaton purchased the property and continued to use it as a country retreat. In 1896, the City of New York appropriated the estate due to the non-payment of taxes, incorporating its 11 acres into East River Park and renaming it in 1910 for the German-American statesman Carl Schurz.

After decades of use as a concession stand and as restrooms for the Park, Gracie Mansion was restored and became the first home of the Museum of the City of New York. When the Museum moved to its Colonial Revival home on Fifth Avenue, Gracie Mansion became one of the first historic house museums run by the Parks Department. Its "power-brokering" Commissioner, Robert Moses, convinced City authorities to designate the house as the official residence of the Mayor. In 1942, Fiorello H. La Guardia and his family moved in, prompted in part by security precautions mandated by the United States' entry into World War II.

Gracie Mansion was enlarged in 1966 with the addition of the Susan E. Wagner Wing, which includes a ballroom and two reception rooms dedicated to official events and public gatherings. After years of neglect and the continual erosion of any trace of history, Mayor Edward I Koch and founding Chair Joan K. Davidson established The Gracie Mansion Conservancy in 1981 as a public/private partnership. Under its guidance, the first major restoration of the house was undertaken between 1981 and 1984. Besides creating a connection between the original house and the Wagner Wing, this effort included the display of art, furniture and decorative objects either purchased or, more often, lent by the City's many cultural institutions. The charter mandate of the Conservancy was not to seal the residence in the past (especially as there is no record of how it originally appeared inside), but to protect its history while accommodating change and progress by successive generations of New Yorkers.

In 2002, the interior and exterior of the “People’s House” were again restored, with increased accessibility to the public and City agencies. The arrival of the de Blasio-McCray household in 2014 restored Gracie’s place as an active, dynamic residence, where history is again being made and presented in ways first envisioned by Moses and LaGuardia nearly 75 years earlier. Today, Gracie Mansion reclaims its place as what Mayor La Guardia described as New York’s “little White House.”

The Gracie Mansion Conservancy continues to operate as a charitable organization dedicated to enhancing and enlivening its namesake. Its mission is to preserve and honor Gracie Mansion’s Federal Period origins while also making sure it remains as forward-looking and welcoming as the city it serves. An increasing share of this work, both inside and outside Gracie, is focused on exploring the many different people and cultures whose contributions to Gracie mansion and the city at large have gone unrecognized for far too long. The Conservancy also works to improve the surrounding landscape and gardens and provide public programming and educational services, including publications and tours for local school students, especially those enrolled in New York State’s 4th and 7th grade civics curricula.

To make a tour reservation or to learn more about Gracie Mansion,
please visit www.nyc.gov/gracie.

A Curated Reinstallation

The art, furnishings, objects, and manuscripts presently on view throughout Gracie's parlor floor help us visualize the lived experience of New Yorkers during the time that this country retreat was built by the Gracie family. It is conceived as a snapshot drawn from public collections.

Windows on the City is a project of addition: Whether in place since the restorations of 1981 or 2002, or first lent in 2015, these materials focus on the late Colonial, Revolutionary, and Federal Periods, a timeline running roughly from 1763 to 1825.

These were the tumultuous decades. The former Dutch and then English outposts of New Amsterdam (1614–1664) and New York evolved from a key trading link connecting Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas into a center of the American revolutionary experiment. The unifying fervor of armed insurrection eventually gave way to the even more challenging task of governance, with 13 states faced with the decision of how far to go in yielding their rights to the new centralized Federal authority.

The artwork and objects now on view were chosen with an aim toward more accurately representing the variety of people living, working and striving side by side during the founding years of the new United States. This retelling through objects reveals that New York City has a tradition of cultural interplay going back to its very beginnings. This story is distilled through five interwoven themes:

- The early days of the nation's founding
- The experience of immigrants and the working class
- The confluence of rural and urban life in a rapidly growing city
- The primacy of global trade
- An uneven distribution of freedom and opportunity

All of these dynamics—which are still in play today—have contributed to the creation of one of the world's most robust social, cultural, political and economic urban centers.

Kalia Brooks, Curator

New York in 1799

When prosperous merchant Archibald Gracie ordered the first stones laid for his new country home along the East River, he—like all Manhattanites past, present and future—owed a great debt of gratitude to the people of the Lenape Tribe of the Algonquin First Nation. When the first European settlers arrived on what was then known as Mannahatta, its first residents and caretakers generously shared their land, their knowledge, and their culture with their new neighbors. As would be the case in so many colonial outposts, the Lenape were ultimately driven out of their home by disease and violence.

At the time of the Mansion's completion, New York was a city of approximately 60,000 people—about the size of modern-day White Plains. The city's roots as a Dutch trading outpost were in evidence throughout the southern tip of the island, which was a winding maze of narrow streets, low buildings, and bustling wharves. But the bustle largely ended north of present-day Canal Street, and Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island remained little more than clusters of villages and farms in a predominantly rural landscape. Like Manhattan, these lands had once been the home of native peoples, but the Matinecock and Canarsie tribes had already been pushed to the edges of their ancestral homes.

As it had been since the days of the Dutch, New York in 1799 was a money town. After the trauma of the American Revolution—a war that had caused a seven-year-long enemy occupation, two fires that destroyed more than a quarter of the city's housing stock, and the flight of wealthy Tory sympathizers—New York's economy came roaring back.

Commerce and trade centered on the humming port encompassing lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, where an exploding network of docks and piers bristled out into the East and Hudson Rivers, and a veritable forest of tall masts lined the harbor. Freed from the strictures and regulations of British Imperial rule, New York's merchants expanded their reach, claiming a piece of the wealth produced by enslaved people in the Caribbean, and opening new markets as far away as India and China.

One of these piers was the site of America's second-largest slave market. Located at the foot of Wall Street—which was named for a wall built in part by enslaved people—the market operated from 1711 to 1762. The peak of slavery in New York City was 1746, when approximately one in five New Yorkers were African or African-American slaves. It is likely that Gracie Mansion itself was built with help from forced labor.

By 1825, the blossoming financial district along Wall Street featured 11 banks, 29 insurance companies, and numerous brokers' offices. During this period, New York surpassed Philadelphia and Boston in both population and commerce, becoming by 1810 the largest city and the busiest port in the new nation. New York's supremacy was cemented in 1825 with the completion of the Erie Canal, a 363-mile-long waterway connecting the Hudson River to the Great Lakes near Buffalo. The Canal made New York a choke point—the conduit through which all the goods and people travelling between the rich agricultural lands of the interior Northeast and the Atlantic Ocean were forced to pass.

For a short time after the Revolution, New York also served as the capital of the newly formed United States. George Washington took the first presidential oath of office on the veranda of the old Pierre L'Enfant-designed Federal Hall, at Wall Street and Nassau Street in lower Manhattan. In 1790, the seat of government moved briefly to Philadelphia, and then to a new city carved out of the swamps between Maryland and Virginia, conveniently astride the Washingtons' estate in Mt. Vernon. Washington, DC would become the young nation's capital of government; New York would become, and remains, our capital of nearly everything else.

New York's growth and distinctive identity has always been fueled by immigration, and the first few decades of the 19th century were no exception. The total number of arrivals around the time Gracie Mansion was built would eventually be surpassed by the great waves of Irish and Germans who came at mid-century, and the floods of Italians and Eastern European Jews who streamed through Ellis Island at the turn of the 20th century. But Gracie's late 18th-century New York was ethnically and culturally rich—in other words, it was distinctively New York.

At the time of the first federal census in 1790, most New Yorkers claimed Dutch and English roots, unsurprising given the city's colonial roots. Almost one-third were Scottish, Irish, or some combination of both. The rest included French Huguenot, Welsh, German, Caribbean, Spanish, and a small but significant Jewish population. In fact, Shearith Israel, New York's first and oldest Jewish congregation, would already be celebrating its 145th anniversary the year Gracie Mansion was built. As far back as 1643, a French visitor identified at least 18 different languages spoken in the city. By 1799, linguistic pluralism had become a way of life.

Although the slave trade was entrenched in New York's economy in Gracie's era, 1799 marked the beginning of the end for the institution. That year, New York State legislators passed the Gradual Emancipation Act—a law that freed the people who were slaves, but did so in a way that was as accommodating as possible to their owners. All enslaved children born after July 4, 1799 were declared emancipated, but not until they spent many of their productive years working for their mother's master; up to the age of 25 for women, and 28 for men. Enslaved people already in servitude would remain so for the rest of their lives, unless they purchased their freedom or were voluntarily manumitted by their masters. Slavery would come to an end in New York a generation later, but the process would be slow.

With a reinvigorated economy and an expanding array of people from across the globe, New York in 1799 was a city primed for growth. Archibald Gracie may have thought that settling as far north as present-day 88th Street would guarantee him a secluded country estate, far removed from the frenetic pace of the city's dense downtown. But many New Yorkers already seemed to realize that the city would continue to spread, both further up Manhattan Island and out into the surrounding communities that would eventually become the other four boroughs. Today the foundations and timber of Gracie Mansion are all that remain of the building Archibald Gracie constructed on the shore of the East River. But the energy and diversity that defined the city he knew are still very much alive.

Objects in the Exhibit

Visitors to Gracie Mansion can view the official website preceding or following their tour to learn more about the works on display and the context they bring from the outside in. The docents and other educators who guide these visits can also explain and answer questions about all of the art and objects.

This illustrated guide to 18 exemplary highlights provides an introduction to the themes and combined intent of *Windows on the City: Looking Out at Gracie's New York*. They are a metaphor for the continuum of diversity that enlivens New York as essentially today as it did at the dawn of the great American experiment.

Look for them while touring the public ground floor rooms.

*Welcome to Gracie Mansion—
The People's House
and home to the Mayor and his family.*



1. VESSEL, ca. 1802-1819

Thomas Commeraw
Stoneware, Cobalt Oxide
Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

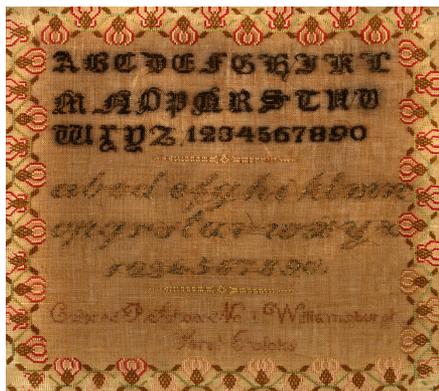
Scholars long assumed that stoneware potter Thomas W. Commeraw was of European descent. Recent research, however, shows that he was a free African American. His pottery studio was located at Corlear's Hook on the East River, near today's Chinatown. He produced utilitarian storage vessels like this jug from 1797 until 1819. Commeraw was involved in the antislavery movement, and in 1820 he traveled to Sierra Leone as an advocate for the American Colonization Society, which promoted the return of free African Americans to Africa.



2. SAMPLER, 1799

Harriot Ward
Linen, Silk
Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

Harriot Ward (1794–1875) was the eldest of Jonathan and Sarah Brown Ward's thirteen children. Born in the rural village of Eastchester, today a neighborhood in the northeastern Bronx, Harriot and her sister Clarissa probably worked their samplers at a girls' school in nearby New Rochelle or Manhattan. Harriot never married, and put her sewing skills to use working as a dressmaker in Manhattan in the 1860s.



3. SAMPLER

Sarah Ricks
Wool and Silk on Linen
Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

This sampler was made by Sarah Ricks (ca. 1835-?), a student at Colored School No. 3 in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, around 1845-50. Colored Public School No. 3 evolved from the town of Williamsburg's original African Free School, which was founded prior to 1841 by local black leaders including Samuel Ricks (1805-1886), Sarah's father. When the Williamsburg district school system was established in 1844, the African Free School was taken over by the trustees and placed in a district school building on North First Street between Third Street (now Berry Street) and Fourth Street (now Bedford Avenue). In 1845, the school had 70 students, and by 1850 enrollment had grown to 145 students, necessitating relocation of the school to Union Avenue and Keap Street. A later building of Colored School No. 3 (later renamed P.S. 69), built in 1879-81 in the Romanesque Revival style, still stands at 270 Union Avenue.

Little is known about Sarah Ricks. Her father appears to have been a prominent African American figure in Williamsburg, then the second largest black community in Kings County. In addition to establishing the African Free School with community leaders, he was a member of the first Board of Trustees of the Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, which was organized in 1832 and erected its first building on North 2nd Street in 1844. Ricks also belonged to a group of Kings County abolitionists. His attendance at a convention of the county's abolitionists in 1841 is mentioned in the *Emancipator* in 1841.

In the 1850 census, the Ricks (Rix) family was comprised of Samuel, a laborer, Sarah, age 16, and her four sisters. All were designated as mulatto by the census taker. In the 1860 census, Sarah (now identified as black) is documented as living with her older sister, Martha, and Martha's husband James Jackson. Sarah had a five-month-old daughter, Augusta. Both she and Augusta disappear from record after that date.



4. SUNDIAL, ca. 1800

Christopher Colles

Copper

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

This sundial is marked by Christopher Colles, a native of Ireland who immigrated to America in 1771 and was a skilled engineer and inventor. The European renaissance brought sundials into popular use and they remained in constant use, mostly by government and commercial institutions, until the mid-1800s when manufacturing of mechanical clocks finally surpassed the accuracy and reliability of sundials. Immigrants to America brought these skills and adapted them to the materials and marketplace emerging in New York.



5. PETER WILLIAMS, ca. 1938

Postcard

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

Williams, who was born a slave in New York, was an ardent Methodist and served as sexton of the John Street Methodist Church. He and his wife, née Mary Durham (1748–1821), were given their freedom in 1796 by the Methodist Society, and Williams subsequently operated a successful tobacconist shop on Liberty Street. He supported the establishment of the Zion Church for Negroes in 1801 and was one of the original trustees. He supported free black emigration to Haiti, the black republic that had achieved independence in 1804. Later in life he strongly opposed the American Colonization Society's efforts to relocate free blacks to Africa.

6. THE TOUSSAINTS, ca. 1825



a



b



c

a. Juliet Noel (Mrs. Pierre) Toussaint

Artist unknown

Watercolor

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

b. Euphemia Toussaint

Artist unknown

Watercolor

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

c. Pierre Toussaint

Artist unknown

Watercolor

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

Pierre Toussaint was a former slave from Haiti brought to the US by his owner in 1787.

Freed in 1807 after the death of his owners, Pierre took the surname Toussaint in honor of the hero of the Haitian Revolution. He became a noted philanthropist to the poor of the city and contributed funds for the building of Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Mulberry St. He was venerated by the Roman Catholic Church in 1996 and continued toward formal beatification and eventual sainthood for exceptional good works, some still coming to light. Pierre was the first layperson to be buried in the crypt under the altar of Saint Patrick's Cathedral on 5th Ave. and is represented here alongside his beloved wife Juliet and daughter Euphemia in tender miniature exactitude.



7. MRS. WILLIAM GRACIE, ca. 1816–1819

John Trumbull

Oil on Canvas

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

Elizabeth Stoughton Wolcott was the daughter of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., governor of Connecticut, and Elizabeth (Stoughton) Wolcott. She was married on July 2, 1813 to William Gracie, son of Archibald Gracie (1755–1829), builder of Gracie Mansion. John Trumbull, a friend of the family, probably painted the subject from life sometime between his return to New York from England in 1816 and her death in 1819. The portrait was a gift to the Society from her grandnephew and hangs near a later one of her husband painted on canvas by artists Samuel Lovett Waldo and William Jewett.



8. MOSES LEVY and GRACE MEARS LEVY, ca. 1725

Gerardus Duyckinck I

Oil on Canvas

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

Although painted decades prior to the revolution and the rise of the new American republic, these fine portraits recall the fact that by 1799 Jewish immigrants and their descendants were a vital and often prominent aspect of New York City, thanks to the relatively tolerant and entrepreneurial Dutch colonists of New Amsterdam. These fine pendant portraits of Moses Levy and his second wife, Grace, typify this component of New York despite a stubborn exclusion from the majority elite still clinging to Old World anti-Semitism. Mr. Levy immigrated to New York from London, and Grace from Spanish Town, Jamaica, together calling to mind the global diaspora of observant Jews and the values contributing over time to the entire society.



9. FEDERAL HALL, 19TH CENTURY, ca. 19th century

Thomas Worth

Pen and Wash Drawing

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

Built in 1700 as New York City's first City Hall, it was adapted at century's end as the nation's first capitol, where the first US Congress met and George Washington's inauguration as President was held in 1789. The original building was demolished in 1812—only the central portion of the iron terrace rail where Washington placed his hand on the Bible survives in the collection of the New-York Historical Society. It was replaced in 1842 by the US Customs House and in 1862 reclaimed the name of Federal Hall as a National Memorial and education center focusing on America's political origins. In 1882, John Quincy Adams Ward's bronze George Washington statue was erected on its front steps, marking the approximate site where he was inaugurated President in the former structure.



10. TONTINE COFFEE HOUSE (WALL STREET), 1797

Francis Guy

Oil on Canvas

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

Established in 1793, the building depicted at the left side of this hectic streetscape with the American flag atop was built by self-anointed stockbrokers as a place for trade and correspondence. It emerged as the foremost New York address for the buying and selling of stocks, making business deals, political transactions, and ship cargo registrations and is therefore seen accurately as the historic cornerstone of American trade and finance and the forerunner of the New York Stock Exchange. Until 1762, the notorious Meal Market stood nearby along the East River shore as the last slave market active in the City. Tontine traders helped end it only when its moral degradations outweighed what had for so long been a central element of trans-Atlantic trade.



11. DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN, 1853

Louisa Ann Coleman

Oil on Canvas (copy of a Francis Guy painting done in the same year)

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

This contemporary copy by one of New York's leading female artists of the day takes its form from paintings by the renowned New York genre painter Francis Guy, whose charming streetscapes, often in wintertime, allow rare glimpses into the lives of average and diverse New Yorkers of all social strata, races, religions, and professions going about their daily business in a metropolis rapidly shifting from rural space to a dense fabric of co-existing urban structures and patterns.



12. STITCH, STITCH, STITCH, 1877

Karl Mueller

Matte-glazed Porcelain

Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum

This statuette draws its inspiration from an 1843 poem by the English poet Thomas Hood. Although it is not an American subject, the motivation of the poem, like this artwork, was to create awareness of the extreme poverty and working conditions of the poor, and, as such, it has great resonance with the immigrant experience in New York, where the textile trade accounted for some of the worst poverty and conditions. And even though the subject is based on an English source, the chief designer at Union Porcelain Works in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, produced this version. The owners of that factory were highly socially conscious and certainly shared Hood's view that the arts needed to address current social issues and could help bring about change.



13. PIPE TOMAHAWK: GIVEN AT THE BIG TREE TREATY OF 1797 TO CHIEF WARRIOR OF THE IROQUOIS

Wood, Silver, Iron, Steel

Courtesy of Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian

At the close of the 18th century the First Nation tribes of New York State were pushed ever westward as treaty after treaty was sealed and later broken. A desire to become part of New York's meritocratic marketplace of commerce and concepts caused ceaseless immigration from abroad and within the original 13 states, leaving little room for the state's original inhabitants. This so-called "peace tomahawk" celebrated such a treaty, emerging from the declining Iroquois Confederacy that had governed New York from the 15th century prior to European contact. In this ultimate instance, at a site by the Genesee River near modern-day Rochester, the Seneca Nation sold under duress all of its remaining New York State lands to the federal government. The year 1799 began with all native peoples living on reservations or under official American control with their material culture disappearing along with the populations who enlivened it.



14. CHINESE PORCELAIN FLOWER VASE, ca. 1805

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

This urn-shaped vase is one of a pair of Chinese export porcelain urns decorated with the coat-of-arms of the United States, blue and gold swags, and other patriotic motifs.

Imported to New York by the East India Company, these vases belonged to General John Morin Scott (1789–1858) and his wife, Mary “Emmie” (Emlen) Scott (1795–1881), who married in 1817. He was a member of Congress and Secretary of New York State. John Morin Scott was the son of Lewis Allaire Scott, Secretary of New York State, and the grandson of Brigadier General John Morin Scott (1730–1784), a member of the Continental Congress and Secretary of New York State from 1782 to 1783. Mary Emlen was the daughter of George Emlen and a Quaker from Philadelphia, Sally Fishbourne. John Morin and Mary Scott’s family letters are in the collection of The New-York Historical Society. Once New York opened direct trade with China, most of the porcelain imported was custom-made for the new American market and, more importantly, for a distinctly American taste. Since the memory of the Revolutionary War was fresh in the minds of New Yorkers, many individuals ordered Chinese export porcelain with their initials surrounded by a democratic shield. Such wares symbolized that New Yorkers were no longer British subjects but independent Americans. New Yorkers ordered porcelain with depictions of the American eagle, state coats-of-arms and various other patriotic symbols.

As works of China’s Chia-Ch’ing (Ch’ing dynasty, 1796–1820), such imports hint at the later arrival of Chinese immigrants themselves who came to personify such early glimpses of mutual economic gain. In 1799 Asian culture planted its roots through such an exchange of goods. John Scott was an influential member of the Continental Congress and these urns, with the prominent eagle, show Scott’s patriotic taste during the early years of the United States. The eagle would have been copied by Chinese artists from emblems on a ship’s official government documents. The eagle decoration on these vases matches that on the 1804 certificate of ownership of the New York China Trade vessel “Elizabeth.” The monogram is that of John (1789–1858) and Mary Emlen Scott.



15. CHINESE PORCELAIN PLATTER, ca. 1790–1810

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

This Chinese export porcelain platter, decorated with the coat-of-arms of New York State with a flower in the center of the shield and with a blue and gilded border, was part of a dinner service owned by Nathan Sanford (1777–1838), Chancellor of the State of New York. Sanford entertained and served both George Washington and Governor Clinton from this service. It was presented to Mr. Ackley of Poughkeepsie by the niece of Mr. Sanford. Chinese export porcelain decorated with a state's coat-of-arms is rare. The official seal of the State of New York was first authorized in 1778 and later revised in 1798. Both versions derived from late-sixteenth century Dutch government seals. Chinese artists adapted the New York State coat-of-arms from ship documents and coins brought over on American China trade ships.



16. THE BAKER CART, CRIES OF NEW YORK SERIES,

ca. 1840–44

Nicolino Calyo

Watercolor, Graphite, and Gouache on Paper, once bound in an album.

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

This fine watercolor by the Neapolitan genre painter Nicolino Calyo—who immigrated to New York just before the Great Fire of 1835—reveals the vulnerability of a metropolis outpacing its own infrastructure. The newly arrived artist made his quick reputation by illustrating this development. It is one of six on view and one of 16 that Calyo painted originally for inclusion in a bound volume. The artist went on to copy them repeatedly, which helped celebrate and preserve the record of the multitude of street vendors and buskers who animated the din of New York’s cacophonous streets in 1799 and on into the present.

By representing such ordinary daily scenes too easily taken for granted, these fragile artworks are unique treasures of New York history. A nearby video installation in the Mansion shows contemporary actors recreating these cries, in some cases with the sorts of riffs and rhyming staccato of Rap. The script is based on scholarly speculation as well as a few contemporary accounts describing their competing cries for buyer attention.

At this time of enlightened municipal growth and governmental innovation, street cries “expressed the intense commercial activity, ethnically mixed populations, and material culture of international port cities.” The streets were a place of freewheeling competition open to all comers in hectic pursuit of an expanding middle class with some money to spare for confronted temptations. Rather than recording specific individuals, Calyo depicted types that captured the unruly complexities of New York during the years of the nation’s lively adolescence.

EXILES of ERIN! READ WHAT FOLLOWS!

And if you have in you a spark of that feeling which distinguishes true Irishmen, resent the infamous treatment our Countrymen have this day been subjected to! If the MADISONIANS abuse us in this way *before* the Election, what may we not expect *after* it, if they succeed? Shall we then vote for a faction, which, after having so long blackguarded us through the City, has at length begun to assault us in the Streets? And all this for what? Because we have dared to proclaim our opinions! Will you bow yourselves down before these Tyrants? Or will you show them that you are men? That you are IRISHMEN? and that you will not HERE receive those chains, which you nobly endeavoured to break in your OWN COUNTRY? I know what you will do. You will not suffer the Guardian Angels of Ireland to weep for the disgrace of its Sons in America.

STATE OF NEW-YORK, ss.

Patrick Cullen, of the City of New-York, a Native of Ireland, being duly sworn, doth depose and say, That he was this day at the Park giving out hand-bills signed *A Citizen*, stating that the advice given by the Great George Clinton has at length been pursued—That a party of Madisonians attacked this deponent, and threatened to break his head—That they took from him by violence the hand-bills, and tore them to pieces, and treated him in the most shameful manner.

PATRICK CULLEN.

Sworn to before me, this 24th day of April, 1809.

T. W. SMITH, Notary Public.

STATE OF NEW-YORK, ss.

Henry Bleney, of the City of New-York, a Native of Ireland, being duly sworn, doth depose and say, that he was treated in the same infamous manner that the abovenamed Patrick Cullen was, and for the same reason.

HENRY BLENLEY.

Sworn to before me, this 24th day of April, 1809.

T. W. SMITH, Notary Public.

17. BROADSIDE: EXILES OF ERIN!, 1809

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society Library

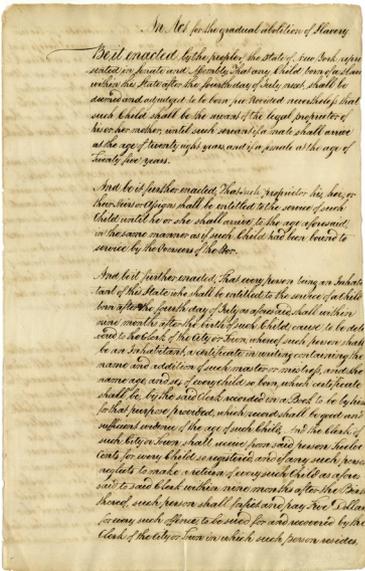
This rare surviving broadside begins defiantly with the manifesto:

Exiles of Erin!

Read what follows!

And if you have in you a spark of that feeling which distinguishes true Irishmen, resent the infamous treatment our countrymen have this day been subjected to! . . .

It was printed for posting and hand distribution as a call to resistance against the social status quo which denied Irish immigrants the same protections of the law and any semblance of equality of opportunity. It recalls the successive waves of immigration that led New York from rural outpost to global city over the course of just a few decades and which transformed it into the modern city it is. Prejudice against “papists” (as used to disparage adherents of Roman Catholicism) first came into sharp focus with the arrival of the Irish who hoped to escape poverty and forge better lives in a new world. This ephemeral document offers rare evidence of a daily struggle common even today.



18. THE GRADUAL EMANCIPATION ACT, NEW YORK STATE, 1799

Ink on Paper

Courtesy of the New York State Archives, a program of the New York State Education Department

In 1799 the New York State Legislature laid out a strategy that ended slavery in the state, but did so in such a way as to soften the blow for slave-owners. This original draft document of the legislation, which was initially called the “Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery,” calls for a two-part plan: 1) All current slaves would remain in servitude for the rest of their lives, but be re-classified as “indentured servants; and 2) All children born after July 4, 1799 would be freed, but only after they had served their mother’s master for a specified period—25 years for females and 28 years for males. The force of this legislation helped pave the way towards full emancipation in New York State in 1827.

It is written with ink and quill in the elegant English cursive standard at that time and famously exemplified by The Declaration of Independence written a generation before.

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LENDERS TO GRACIE MANSION

Brooklyn Museum

Merchant's House Museum

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Museum of the City of New York

New-York Historical Society

New York Public Library

New York State Archives, a program of the New York State Education Department

Public Design Commission

Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian

SPECIAL THANKS

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Thelma Golden

John Haworth

Sarah Henry

Historic House Trust

Graham Hodges

Margi Hofer

The Mayor's Office of Printing and
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O&M Co.: Rick Miramontez, Sarah Babin
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Jan Ramirez

Bob Stern

*List in formation as of
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