

EXPERIMENT IN SOCIAL CHANGE:  
ONE VIEW OF THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF  
THE HUDSON RIVER SLOOP, CLEARWATER

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ABSTRACT

EXPERIMENT IN SOCIAL CHANGE: ONE VIEW OF THE FIRST FIVE YEARS  
OF THE HUDSON RIVER SLOOP, CLEARWATER

By

Joseph Janeti

In 1966 a number of Hudson Valley residents decided to form a group called Hudson River Sloop Restoration which would work toward building a replica of a Hudson River sloop. Hudson River sloops played a significant role in the development of the early Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam and the development of the American colonies in general. The early direction of Hudson River Sloop Restoration was historical and served to stimulate public interest in regional history.

As the organization developed it took on other dimensions as well. The construction of the Clearwater tended to involve citizens who were interested in sailing and nautical history. So significant was this aspect of the Clearwater that Time Magazine labeled it the "best known sailing vessel in America today.

The involvement of the sloop organization with the Hudson River and with the history of the Hudson Valley led to a natural interest in the state of the Hudson itself. The organization became active in promoting citizen action aimed at environmental legislation. Its relatively early role in the expanding field of environmental education served to transform the Clearwater into a symbol which helped

stimulate public investigation into the realities of the nationwide ecological crises.

Since the early board of directors of the sloop organization included internationally-known folk-singer Pete Seeger as its chairman, it had a ready-made avenue for fundraising and public involvement. The Hudson River "Sloop Concerts" became a means of attracting the public, the press, and international media people.

As Hudson River Sloop Restoration moved into its fifth year, other organizational developments were beginning to surface. The Clearwater became a kind of "floating classroom". Local schoolboards made use of the Clearwater to develop some dramatic methodology to aid in the teaching of history, art, literature, mathematics, and environmental education.

The combination of sailors, historians, scientists, musicians, educators, environmentalists, lawmakers, activists, and rank-and-file citizen members make Hudson River Sloop Restoration a very dynamic organization. As interesting as its successes were the many internal conflicts arising out of the interworking of its eclectic membership. The failures and successes of this diversified group in its efforts to work together toward a commonly held goal of a better Hudson Valley is perhaps the most interesting aspect of Hudson River Sloop Restoration.

In one sense, Hudson River Sloop Restoration's expressed ideals mirror the fundamental democratic presuppositions of the United States as a whole. Pete Seeger, in an early statement on the composition of Hudson River

Sloop Restoration, noted:

The sloop Clearwater has brought together people who normally don't speak to each other: wealthy yachtsmen and kids from the ghetto, shaggy students and crewcut Legionaires, housewives and scientists, teenagers and goldenagers, churchmen and athiests, businessmen and anti-businessmen, farmers and housing developers and conservationists, DAR members and new immigrants.

For the social or cultural historian, the organization provides an unusually live case study in the problems and workings of American democratic principles. In this sense a study of the sloop project is a miniature study of American society at large.

This study proposes to review the various disciplines, frames of reference, and public groups which have composed Hudson River Sloop Restoration from its founding to the present. More especially, however, it will analyze the problems and pressures which develop as a result of the inter-relationship of these various groups. Finally, it will portray both the overall effect of Hudson River Sloop Restoration in public affairs, and its educative value for those individuals who participated in the organization directly.

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## Forward

Why I received a flier-invitation to the "Hudson Valley Folk Picnic" held in June of 1968 is its own story. My involvement with the Clearwater began when I decided to attend that picnic. There was a wooden model of a boat, a stage that looked something like the deck of a ship, and, as I recollect, some words said by Pete Seeger about the idea of building a sloop. I didn't understand very much about the sloop, but I remember following Pete Seeger around a bit, watching from afar as he sampled someone's home-made pie, sang songs to some little children gathered around a tree stump on a hill-side, and talked and listened to a lot of people. I didn't hear Pete sing that day, but I did see hundreds of people dancing arm in arm in a large meadow surrounded by giant oak, hickory, and maple trees. I have never got that scene of those people dancing out of my mind; it remains, I think, the most beautiful thing I ever saw. What I did forget pretty quickly was the talk about the sloop.

Some fifteen months later, a couple of days before I was to return to East Lansing from a summer in the east, I was visiting at a friend's house in Scarsdale, New York. She mentioned that she had been thumbing through a TV Guide and saw that Pete Seeger was scheduled to be on a TV special that evening. We decided to watch it. The special, which was nationally broadcast, turned out to be not about Pete,



but about a 76 foot long sloop, with a hundred foot mast. During the fifteen months while I was running around the country and learning about the mid-west, the Clearwater had been built, fitted out, and launched. I suddenly made the connection between the picnic, the half-heard talk about a sloop, some words of Pete's on a May 1969 appearance on the Johnny Carson Show, and this young miracle, the Clearwater.

There was still two days before returning to East Lansing so we decided to find out whether we could still see the Clearwater. It turned out that the sloop was about to host its last festival of the year at Kingston, New York. The following day about six of us loaded in a car and drove the hundred miles to the festival. Sure enough, it was everything the TV special had characterized - bright banners, colorful displays, a beautiful boat, all kinds and ages of people. I was very impressed. A year later many different people told me I had picked a good day. It was the Clearwater's best celebration of the season. There was, of course, no way for me to know that; I believed what I saw.

I probably would never have become involved with the Clearwater had not the MC of the music program noticed my banjo lying on the ground. "Some of our performers didn't show up and we need some people to fill in up to six o'clock. Do you think you could help out?"

I had never performed music before and had only been playing the banjo for a few months but, "What the hell" I figured. An hour later Pete Seeger was introducing my friend

and me and we were singing in front of, and along with, a thousand people on a sloop concert. "Samba la cosa!" I thought.

We were asked to perform again that night but since we had to get our riders back to New York, we decided to decline. We did agree to show up the next day and sing a few more songs. What I remember most about that next day was the music program. There was a junior gospel choir from a local church, a lot of folksingers, and a policeman! The policeman, suspicious of the whole undertaking on Saturday, had, by Sunday, become so thoroughly involved that he asked whether he might be allowed to sing a song for the assembled audience. The MC was delighted. The policeman sang, "You'll Never Walk Alone", while Pete accompanied him on twelve-string guitar. I doubt that anyone who was there will ever forget that picture of the two people on stage: Pete Seeger, the outspoken fighter for social causes, the legendary victim of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and the policeman, completely dressed in official blue, gun strapped to his side.

The day (and the Clearwater's first season) ended with a marching band composed of mothers, fathers, children, and maybe even a dog or two playing some marching music. Allan Aunapu, captain of the Clearwater, began marching around the festival field. He was joined by dozens of others - then hundreds. For fifteen minutes the marching and dancing continued; and then it was over.

I went back to East Lansing the next day but never really

forgot the Clearwater. What stood out most in my mind was the way the Kingston festival had managed to bring together people who normally wouldn't have anything to do with one another. I remembered also that the project really needed money so I thought, "Wouldn't it be great to organize some benefit concerts and raise some money for the Clearwater!"

The first concerts we put together in Michigan made \$400. Considering how far it was from the Hudson Valley, I suppose I should have been elated. Instead, I almost apologetically sent the money to Pete Seeger thinking, "What could such a small amount of money be good for?" I was amazed a few days later to receive a letter that said:

Holy Mackerel! What a wonderful surprise. If it is okay with you I would like to earmark this for a special fund to get a Clearwater Songbook printed. Don McLean is already working on it. We need some cash advance for the printer and these four hundred dollars will really come in handy....In the long run the books should make a profit so East Lansing's investment should end up being a sizeable contribution.

The letter was encouraging so we worked a bit harder. We managed to get more concerts together in Michigan and Ohio. The main result of these concerts was not so much the money but the interchange that was beginning to develop with Pete Seeger. The idea of me working with the sloop project gradually began to emerge. A few more letters passed back and forth, the result of which was my joining the Clearwater at Cold Spring, New York on June 13, 1970.

Over the course of that summer I did many different things: performed at some music festivals, did some

community organizing, helped develop displays and the exhibit trailer, drove a truck, picked up garbage, got rained on a lot, sat in on policy-making sessions. It was an expanding time for the sloop and almost anything was open to anyone interested in doing it. During this time I was one of many volunteers who lived with the Seegers, and the summer was pretty much devoted to working with the many kinds of people who made up the "sloop group". We were continuously with one or another person in the project. Being somewhat a "hanger-outer" I believe I probably talked to every kind of person that worked with the Clearwater. Being also something of a jack-of-all-trades, I got involved in many types of jobs and numerous aspects of the sloop project.

One afternoon, riding north on the Taconic State Parkway, I was listening to Jimmy Collier talk about some of the inside deliberations that had taken place in the civil rights movement. It occurred to me as he was talking that if one were to put together all of the participating people's ideas, the story of what went on in the sloop organization would make an interesting book. I put the idea aside however, because I felt that the very thing which would make such a book interesting was the candid nature of the remarks made by the different people involved. Since most of what passed back and forth was not meant for the media, I felt that the disclosure of some of this material would violate the personal confidence within which it had been expressed.

When I left the Hudson Valley in September I hoped I

would never see the Clearwater again. What had gone on that summer was too confusing for my small mind to deal with. Some of what went on was beautiful; some of what went on was ugly; all of what went on was too real. After a year went by I finally started understanding a little of what I had learned the year before. It took six more months to incorporate it into my life. I would say without question that my involvement in the sloop project has thus far been the most significant learning experience of my life, but that is another subject.

In the fall of 1970 Doug Miller of the history department of Michigan State University suggested that I do a study of the Clearwater. I turned down the idea for mainly the already stated reasons of confidence and proximity. Some fifteen months later in winter of 1972 Victor Howard of Michigan State University's American Studies Department also suggested a study of the Clearwater. By this time I was far enough away from personal involvement in it to take the idea a bit more seriously.

I wrote to Pete Seeger to see how he felt about the idea of a detailed "history" of Hudson River Sloop Restoration being written. I was not sure if it was yet the proper time for such a study. However, Pete's response was quite positive.

With a Michigan State University grant I bought a field recorder and financed two trips to the east coast. I talked to twenty or thirty people and was given access to all

Hudson River Sloop Restoration files. Access to both of these was comparatively easy, in part due to my earlier work with the sloop.

The story that follows is put together from a number of sources. Chiefly it is a memoir, though not written in the first person. I have spent a good deal of time in the Hudson Valley over the last five years so most of the focus is drawn from first-hand experience, letters, phonecalls, etc. The second largest resource is the body of interviews on tape. These cover about thirty recorded hours and are a representative cross section of the people who made up the sloop project. The third source was the Hudson River Sloop Restoration files. I was allowed access to all papers. These included official documents, hundreds of newspaper reviews, and all correspondence - public, and private. The fourth source for this study was several pamphlets and magazine articles, which, besides the many newspaper items, comprise the only heretofore written material on the Clear-water.



## INTRODUCTION

What follows is not really for the long-time sloop-chaser or even the rank-and-file citizen of the Hudson Valley. Rather, it is for the person who has never heard of the sloop, Clearwater, or even seen the Hudson River.

Hudson River Sloop Restoration members will wish that more had been said about ecology, or history, or music, or boats. But that is all beside the point. The Hudson River sloop, Clearwater is something a bit larger than the sum of its parts. Actually, it is a very inventive experiment in social change.

We in twentieth-century America are part of an over-anxious society. The middle-class tells us that "the problem" is the poor, the poor tell us "the problem" is the rich, the rich tell us "the problem" is the government. Where do we turn when everyone is either "middle class", a "fascist pig", or an "intellectual snob"?

The only sensible answer is for everyone to stop the name-calling and finger-pointing and realize that if the world is going to make it into the twenty-first century, everyone is going to have to lend a hand, and this means everyone. We are not going to buy our way, shoot our way, or bargain our way. We are going to have to work our way.

Our first job is to let everyone have his or her say. It may take a long time, but at least we'll have all the complaints out in the open. Next, we are going to have to realize that our rainbow-like world, both beautiful and difficult because of its many colors and facets, is not likely to change or necessary to change. Rather, we must come to the point of being able to say, "Good morning Red, my name is Green. I hope you enjoy being Red today, because I enjoy being Green. I don't really understand about redness but that's okay because I'm not red. If you don't care for greenness, that's okay as long as you let me be green." As in the rainbow, we need only blend where our edges meet.

Practically speaking, what does this mean? It means we must find new and meaningful ways of seeing one another and working with one another. We are going to have to find ways of agreeing to disagree.

The Hudson River sloop Clearwater was an attempt in such a direction. One group of people took a limited problem: a dirty river; they decided to bring to bear on the problem as many forces as were available in their locale - this meant rich, poor, black, white, scientists, fishermen, musicians, historians, lawyers, and sailors. What they accomplished or didn't accomplish is what this story is about. More important than an ecological project, it was an exercise in communication, an experiment in social change.

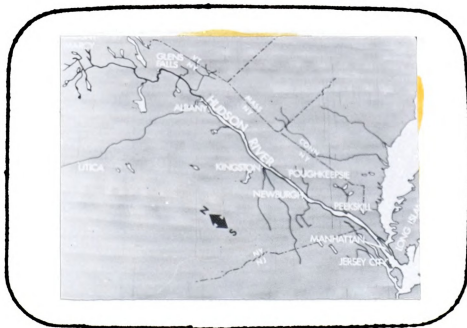
I believe we can make it into the twenty-first century,

but not unless everyone is paying the same amount for their soybeans, and waiting on check-out lines of equal length.

I.

"It is by far the most interesting river in America, considering the beauty and magnificence of its scenery, its natural, political, and social history, the agricultural and mineral treasures of its vicinage, the commercial wealth hourly floating upon its bosom, and the relations of its topography and geography to some of the most important events in the history of the western hemisphere."

Benson J. Lossing 1866



For the casual visitor, the scene on Morton Street Pier that Friday evening in late August seemed predictably exciting. Looking west, he could see the seven o'clock sun setting over New Jersey. From across the river, just a bit to the north, sailing gracefully toward the pier, was the Hudson River sloop, Clearwater. Silhouetted against the beautiful palisades, the Clearwater was a distinctive symbol of the purity and simplicity of an earlier time when there was a greater unity between human beings and the natural order. Contrasted dramatically with the smog, soot, factories, and chimneys of the New Jersey skyline, the Clearwater also served to remind those on the pier of one of the frightful prices of what Henry Adams termed the "multiplicity" of the modern age.



As the Clearwater moved slowly into position to tie up, the same casual visitor was understandably excited by

the sounds which filled the air: shrill cries of little children, the constant clicking of photographers' cameras, the continuous shouted orders of Captain Oestergard, the heaving and hauling of the great ropes, the creaking sound of the turning capstan. Soon, the pier was overrun with workers of every description: local sloop club officials carrying news of permits, sound-systems, and washing facilities for the crew, volunteers readying themselves for setting up and running the weekend festival scheduled to begin in the morning, "shore-crew" advance men rolling the exhibit-trailer into place, reporters and media men looking for this or that interview, lots of local teenagers carrying guitars, hoping that some new song they had just written would be heard and enthusiastically received by the public. Through all, a few calm and a few not-so-calm local residents, taking their customary evening walk, wondered about all the noise on their usually quiet pier; and, here and there, some lone pigeon tried to find a peaceful resting place.

The scene then, for our casual visitor, was one of excitement, movement, anticipation. A hundred years earlier, a similar kind of setting might well have signaled the arrival of a steamboat, or a railroad train, or perhaps even the circus. This evening, however, it marked the arrival of the Hudson River sloop Clearwater and preliminary preparations for a three-day "sloop festival."

The story of the Clearwater, however, is more than a

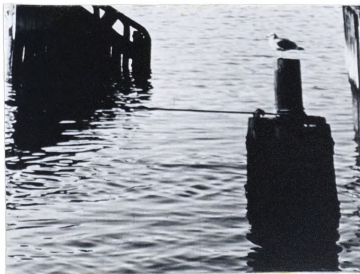


history of a beautiful boat with great white sails; it is more than the story of a lot of music and good times. It is also a history of some hard times, some sad times, some disagreement, some arguments, and a whole lot of agonizingly hard work. In one sense it is a tale of America itself: the history of a group of very un-like-thinking people trying to forget, in one arena at least, the differences which so often divide one human being from another, and to pool talents, energies, and aspirations to bring off a commonly held goal based on a commonly shared idea: to bring together a group of dissimilar people who, by sharing their interests and talents, would help clean up a river and a valley.

So if after the sun had sunk below the New Jersey palisades that evening, our casual visitor might have been allowed to share the crew's simple supper down on the Clearwater deck, he might have noticed, amid the anxious tone of the conversation, the voicing of opinions which were a bit divergent not only with each other, but with the publicly accepted concept of what the Clearwater was all about as well.

This August weekend, in fact, is particularly significant in the history of Hudson River Sloop Restoration. The events of the three-day period were particularly provoking in setting at odds with one another every un-like thinking group in the organization. How their differences were resolved or left unresolved is a good indication of the kind

of argumentative, yet cooperative venture the sloop project was, and is.





## II

"The sloops which ply the Hudson are remarkable for their picturesque beauty, and nothing is more beautiful than the little fleets of from six to a dozen, all scudding or tacking together, like so many white seabirds on the wing."

N.P. Willis 1840





Hudson River sloops, whose design combined the best of both Dutch and English nautical ideas, had a formidable influence on the settling and development of the Hudson Valley. During the early Dutch settlement of the region, they provided practically the only means of communication between the northern colony of Fort Orange (Albany), the great seaport colony of New Amsterdam (New York), and Esopus (Kingston), the settlement about half-way in between. The Dutch were active traders and these strong wide boats carried cargo not only up and down the river, but back and forth between Europe, the Caribbean, and the colonies as well.

When the British took over the Hudson Valley they modified these craft somewhat. Hudson River sloops, as they eventually developed, had a flatter bottom than ocean-going sloops and would consequently draw less water. This made them an ideal craft for traffic on the river which, in places, was quite shallow.

In the early settlement of the New York region sloops were virtually the only means of travel up and down the valley. Since the railroads did not make their appearance until after 1847, sloops continued to be pre-eminent in travel in the valley well into the 1800's. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were over two hundred of them engaged in commerce on the river.

Sloops also provided transportation for all kinds of commercial goods. Cargos of vegetables, fruit, hay, stone,



brick, and ice could commonly be seen on the deck of a south-bound boat. Sloops bound upriver would be laden with manufactured items, books, whale oil, and dry goods.



With the coming of the steamboat after 1807 sloops were forced to make their schedules more precise in order to keep up with their fuel-powered competitors. Notices would be posted in localities advertising when a particular sloop would arrive and what it would be carrying. Villagers could purchase cargo if the sloop was bound north, or sign crops or products on with the captain if he was on his way to New York.

The Hudson River sloops had other value besides use as a commercial vessel. For the river traveler sloops opened up a world of great but simple beauty. Washington Irving, writing in 1800, told excitedly of his trip on board a sloop:

What a time of intense delight was that first sail through the Highlands! I sat on the deck as we slowly tided along at the foot of those stern mountains, and gazed with wonder and admiration at cliffs impending far above me, crowned with forests, with eagles sailing and screaming around them; or listened to the unseen stream dashing down precipices, or beheld rock, and tree, and cloud, and sky reflected in the glassy stream of the river...how solemn and thrilling the scene as we anchored at night at the foot of these mountains...and everything grew dark and mysterious; and I heard the plaintive note of the whip-or-will from the mountain-side, or was startled now and then by the <sup>1</sup>sudden leap and heavy splash of the sturgeon.

James Fenimore Cooper was well acquainted with the simple beauty of river travel aboard a Hudson River sloop. Of the old days on the river before the coming of the steam-boat, he wrote:

In that day, the passenger did not hurry on board...he passed his morning saying adieu, and when he repaired to the vessel it was with gentleman-like leisure, often to pass hours on board previously to sailing...There was no jostling of each other...no impertinence manifested, no swearing...On the contrary, wine and fruit were provided, as if the travellers intended to enjoy themselves; and a journey in that day was a festa...The vessel usually got aground at least once, and frequently several times a trip; and often a day or two, were thus delightfully lost, giving the stranger an opportunity <sup>2</sup>of visiting the surrounding country.

Walt Whitman, too, was a traveler on these beautiful boats:

We sailed along at a stiff rate - told anecdotes and riddles, and chatted and joked, and made merry. As for me, I blessed my lucky stars; for merely to sail - to bend over and look at the ripples as the prow divided the water - to lie on my back and gaze by the half-hour at the passing clouds overhead - merely to breathe and live in that sweet air and clear <sup>3</sup>sunlight...was happiness enough for one day.

Since early steamboats had higher shipping rates, were less reliable, and were not so elegant a way to travel, the sloops maintained their pre-eminence in river transportation far into the days of steam. George William Curtis spoke for many when he wrote in 1852:

It was a happy fortune for the beauty of the river that steam did not drive away the sails. It was feared that the steamers would carry all the freight, and so bereave the river of the characteristic and picturesque life of the white sailed sloops.



By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, these sailing ships, still dependent on the wind and tide, were no longer any match for the much-improved steamboats. They were gradually seen less and less until by 1900 there were none even in existence. The passing of these beautiful boats marked the loss of a special kind of beauty in the Hudson Valley.

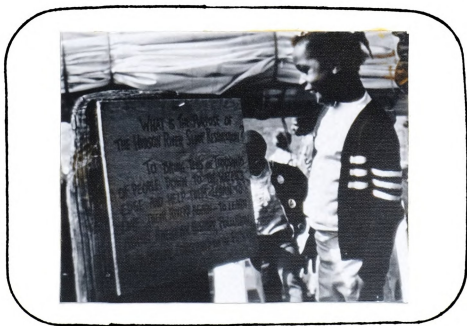
- 1 Washington Irving, quoted in Bob Atkinson, "Setting Sail For Yesterday", in Audubon, vol. 73, no. 2, March 1971, p.74.
- 2 James Fenimore Cooper, ibid., p.74.
- 3 Walt Whitman, ibid., p.75.
- 4 George William Curtis, ibid., p.76.

### III

"The purpose for which this Corporation is formed, which is to be charitable and no other, is: to acquaint people with matters relating to our cultural heritage and to maintain and promote interest in the history of the Hudson River both as a commercial and pleasure artery; and in connection therewith to build, own, operate, and exhibit replicas of the great sloops which once freely navigated the river, thereby generating a greater interest in our cultural heritage and an understanding of the contributions made to our culture and commerce by the river and the sloops which sailed it."

### ARTICLE II

#### Hudson River Sloop Restoration Incorporating Charter



Although the tone of its incorporating charter was distinctly historical, from the beginning the membership of Hudson River Sloop Restoration was marked by a kind of diversity uncommon in most organizations. The first impulse to restore or build a Hudson River sloop developed within a group of Hudson Valley residents basically interested in living by the river and sailing on it occasionally. One of those in this first group was Pete Seeger whose own Beacon, New York, home was built high on a mountainside overlooking a ten-mile span of the Hudson. In 1966 Vic Schwartz, a resident of Cold Spring, New York, the town just south of Beacon and some fifty miles north of New York City, had lent Seeger a copy of William Verplanck and Moses Collyer's book, The Sloops of the Hudson.<sup>1</sup> Together, they came up with the idea of locating the hull of one of these beautiful old boats and restoring it so that there could be at least one sloop sailing the river again. Vic Schwartz talked about the idea among friends riding the morning commuter train into New York City. Soon, there was an enthusiastic group interested in the project.

In July of 1966 a picnic or "lawn party" was held at the Garrison, New York, home of Alexander Saunders. Pete Seeger sang a few songs, and the folks that had gathered talked the idea around a bit. By the end of the party \$154 had been collected, Alexander Saunders elected treasurer, some committees set up, and Hudson River Sloop Restoration had been

born.

In the beginning the members of Hudson River Sloop Restoration were essentially a small group of friends and neighbors. Nevertheless, even at this early stage, they were interested in the organization for different reasons. While the first impulse for building or rebuilding a sloop had come from a group Pete Seeger called "some sailing nuts", the sloop organization was already taking on historical and ecological dimensions as well. At this point in Hudson River Sloop Restoration's development, Pete Seeger was a very influential leader. His years of work in folk-lore and folk-music made him a person of obvious historical perspective. Moreover, the character of the boat itself lent an historic bent to the group. The Sloops of the Hudson, published in 1908, had talked about the beauty and grace of these old sailing boats as a bygone fact. The authors had predicted that such simple elegance would never be seen again on the waters of the Hudson. Besides the Clearwater, there were no other sloops in existence in 1967. It was therefore a natural development for the sloop project to take on historical and antiquarian dimensions.

At the same time, there was a developing environmental perspective. Since most of the people in the early sloop group lived in Hudson River towns, they were concerned at first hand with the state of the Hudson River Valley itself. Within this environmentally-directed group there was an

interesting assortment of people. Helene Duffy, a Poughkeepsie resident, eventually became the first executive director of Hudson River Sloop Restoration. She and some of her neighbors were becoming involved in ecological questions because of the threat of the proposed pumped-storage plant which Consolidated Edison was planning to build at nearby Storm King Mountain. She tells of her early involvement with Hudson River Sloop Restoration in these words:

A great many of the people that were early involved in it like Ernie Walvada, and Vic Schwartz, and several other people from the Cold Spring-Garrison area, got involved in it because Vic Schwartz rode the commuter train with them and talked about the idea. That was essentially how I got involved. It was my husband that rode the commuter train. I can remember his coming home with this idea...of building a Hudson River sloop. I didn't even know what a Hudson River sloop was at the time. At that point I don't think anyone else did either.<sup>2</sup>

Alexander Saunders, a long-time resident and successful businessman from Cold Spring, New York, is owner of a tool and die foundry. His interest in environmental issues is underlined by his membership in Scenic Hudson, a conservation group founded in 1963 to help preserve the beauty of the mid-Hudson region. Of his first involvement with the sloop group, Saunders recounts:

I understood that Pete Seeger and various friends were interested in doing something in the way of building a replica of a Hudson River sloop... Pete Seeger had wanted to do something for Scenic Hudson...There was one particular individual who, for reasons that don't have to go into the record, didn't like Pete Seeger. He was a very important individual in our organization. He really didn't want to have any association of Scenic Hudson with Pete Seeger or any support from Pete Seeger, (which is a strange thing at this point.) It did kind of



get my dander up as it were, that there was this discrimination or criticism of someone that I admired, namely Pete. And so it did pique my interest as to what Pete wanted to do for the river. It did seem that the creation of the sloop would be a way of helping the river and, indirectly, a way of helping this Scenic Hudson cause. So, I did join the group that worked on the original idea. Having a place of business here in Cold Spring, and being that<sup>3</sup> minded, I was willing to be treasurer of it.

And, of course, again there was Pete Seeger whose interests and recordings of songs about environmental problems made him what Dom Pirone was later to call "one of the finest citizen ecologists in the country."

The fact is that although the incorporating charter profiled Hudson River Sloop Restoration as basically an historical group, the organization had as its first members sailing buffs and citizen ecologists as well. But this was only the beginning. Hudson River Sloop Restoration's eventual membership was to be even more diversified. Next to come were the musicians.

The idea of the original little "lawn party" eventually developed into the first annual "Hudson Valley Folk Picnic". There was to be some music, some games, some singing, some dancing, some home-cooked food, and a whole lot of home-made fun. On June 24, 1967, the picnic was held on the Bill Osborne property in Garrison, New York. A description of the proposed sloop was announced to those on hand. A plea for donations was made. In all, some \$1500 was raised. The sloop group now had a real bank account. Many of the people

present were there simply because they enjoyed music and dance. They had a good time, liked the sound of the idea, and contributed their dollars to the project. As time went on the number of people attracted to the project because of the festivals and concerts increased greatly. The next "Hudson Valley Folk Picnic" was held in June of 1968. This celebration, which netted \$10,000 had as one of its drawing points the performances of some well-known musicians. Moreover, Pete Seeger had been performing some benefit concerts, the proceeds of which went into the sloop fund. A substantial part of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's expanded following, then, was made up of people who enjoyed singing, performing, and listening to music, and who donated time and money because of that dimension of the sloop project.



- 1 Moses and Collyer, Sloops of the Hudson, New York and London, 1908.
- 2 Helene Duffy, tape transcript: original copy.
- 3 Alexander Saunders, tape transcript, original copy.

#### IV

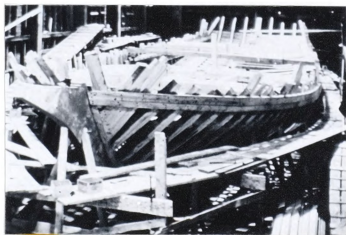
"And it's a coalition of people that have come from different types of activities and because of that we did have people who were interested in the boat as an historical object, an historical replica of boats that sailed the river. We've had people who were primarily interested in the ecological aspect of the river being polluted...and there were others, myself being one of these, who were primarily interested in the things that could happen to people surrounding the boat and the things that could happen in terms of developing power bases that people could operate from in the valley."

Jimmy Collier 1972





The original idea of the sloop group had been to find and restore a nineteenth-century sloop. When the search for an old hull proved unsuccessful, an attempt was made, during the summer of 1968, to locate a Hudson River shipbuilder to begin work on a new sloop.



The new boat had been designed by Cy Hamlin after completely researching old plans, drawings, and paintings of sloops. When no Hudson Valley shipbuilder could be located, the contract was finally given to one of the few surviving craftsmen of the old shipbuilding school, Harvey Gamage of Bristol, Maine.





The keel was laid in November of 1968, and the Clearwater was launched on May 17, 1969.

For its maiden voyage a singing crew was enlisted to deliver the Clearwater to New York City. This group of musician-sailors spent a month bringing the Clearwater down the New England coast to the mouth of the Hudson River. To help defray the expenses of building and fitting out the Clearwater the singing crew raised a good deal of money by giving almost nightly concerts in the major cities visited in its trip down the New England coast. At last, in August of 1969, the Clearwater was delivered to New York harbor amid a great deal of fanfare, media coverage, and speeches by politicians. It was ready to begin its first sail up the Hudson.

As proposed, the Clearwater was host to a number of waterfront festivals over the course of the next six weeks.



Stopping at one or another Hudson River town the boat would generally dock for a couple of days. During this time visitors would be allowed on board to look over the boat. There were a number of portable displays on Hudson River Valley history and on the general theme of river ecology. For entertainment there were music programs, speakers, and booths with hand-crafted goods, home-made foods, and environmental information.

The original idea behind these riverfront celebrations was that they would be community festivals. It was hoped that the general tone as well as the major participation would come from the community rather than be imposed from the outside by the sloop organization. Thus, a festival at Kingston might have on its program a speaker interested in getting some community project approved, or a gospelsinging group from a local church. At one such festival, a policeman assigned to keep an eye on things ended up singing, "You'll Never Walk Alone" for the assembled crowd. The local character of the festival was what was important.



By the time the Clearwater's first summer was officially over (September 17, 1969), onlookers had a pretty fair idea of how Hudson River Sloop Restoration, Inc. was going to operate in the future.

First, there were the very promising achievements. The Clearwater had been built, paid for, and launched. It had made its maiden voyage up the Hudson and had, in fact, drawn many people to the riverside. There were numerous newspaper and magazine articles. There were television news-spots and specials. A two hour NET program hosted by Steve Allen and broadcast in September, sent the story of the sloop project into homes throughout the country. The combined media coverage gave an incredible amount of publicity to not only the Clearwater, but, as had been anticipated, to the problem of Hudson River pollution as well.

The Clearwater's achievements had to be weighed, however, against the problems which were beginning to emerge within the sloop organization. Pete Seeger, the most vocal spokesman for Hudson River Sloop Restoration had, in many places, called for an organization to be made up of "conservative oldsters, bearded students, youths from the ghetto, farmers, teachers, housewives and teenagers, and small-town merchants." <sup>1</sup> As improbable as such an organization would seem, it became a very real profile of Hudson River Sloop Restoration membership. While it represented, on one hand, an interesting experiment in democratic principles, it represented, at the same time, a practical impossibility

when decision-making was necessary. Already, the internal conflicts which were bound to arise in an organization with such a diverse membership were becoming apparent.

The singing crew of the Clearwater, which was responsible for its delivery to New York City, was a group of about a dozen musician-sailors- musicians first, sailors second. Alexander Saunders tells of the delivery of the Clearwater to New York City:

The delivery crew coming down were a group of singers and they worked very hard. They were not, for the most part, boatsmen except for a few people of technical ability.

As the Clearwater came down the coast, a lot of people interested in it as a boat, as a ship, as a yacht, were in a state of shock when they saw the condition of the condition of the boat - which really reflected the working conditions of the delivery crew. They were moving the boat, they were living on board the boat in crowded quarters. They were having a series of concerts, so they were up half the night. They were often sleeping in the morning when the public came aboard when it was tied up to the dock. People started looking at the boat, and it looked kind of strange from a tight-ship-handled appearance.

When it came down to New York, all the interests in the sloop came together and it was almost a cataclysm. It was a very hot day. Everybody was very emotionally charged. Having been a little bit in the navy, I have a...feeling for the people who are on the boat and are working, and are dirty, and want a bath, and want to get their feet on shore, and the clash between them and the shore people who come on board all rested and expecting everything to be turned out for them. Well, here were the people greeting the boat in New York who had all their hopes in the sloop, saw it as a beautiful thing, and couldn't understand why maybe they weren't receiving the yacht of their dreams, or something like that. <sup>2</sup>

The conflict here was based on differing views of the Clearwater's actual role. This was to become a critical problem in Hudson River Sloop Restoration within a year.

Another problem already apparent was with the sloop festivals. For one thing, they were not all equally successful. The kind of community ferment necessary to spark a good festival was often absent from towns long disposed to relative conservatism. Furthermore, at this early stage, the festivals were, in the main, the work of a few people. If the pace of the Clearwater and the sloop festivals was to be maintained for its second year, it would be necessary to have a more elaborate system of design-execution than during the first year. More important than this, if the organization were going to survive at all, a great deal of cooperation was going to be necessary among the boat people, ecology people, musicians, fund-raisers, and soon-to-arrive community organizers.

- 1 Sloops of the Hudson, Hudson River Sloop Restoration pub.,  
New York, 1970, p.3.
- 2 Alexander Saunders, edited tape transcript, sec. 1.

"The musical programs we hold on the waterfront should represent the different tastes and traditions of all the people in the town...So, during the weekend, the mikes may be used by a teen-age rock band or a barbershop quartet, or a jazz combo, or a fiddle, or a bongo drum. If someone wants to bring his piano down, he can give us a concierto. Perhaps there will be clowns or puppets for the kids, or the high school tumbling team. Who knows? All we are sure of now, is that it should be a community party on the waterfront."

Pete Seeger 1969



It might one day be said that summer of 1970 was Hudson River Sloop Restoration's most complex season. All in all, during that time, what was best and what was worst in the sloop organization as originally conceived was brought forward. The project would continue afterward but it would continue in a different form. What 1969 had suggested was possible, 1970 was to bring into reality: successes and failures both.

It was to be a festival summer. In all, some twenty-one waterfront celebrations were planned. In order to bring them about as efficiently as possible it was decided that Hudson River Sloop Restoration would hire two "advance men". As in the great days of the circus, it would be their job to do the public relations work necessary to get the selected towns ready for the festivals. They would find a dock large enough to handle the Clearwater, obtain a docking permit, secure electricity and water privileges, contact local community groups (civic, church, cultural, etc.), and arrange for displays, exhibits, booths, food, rest room facilities, and a music program.

The two people hired for this complex job on a New York State Council on the Arts grant were Lesta Morningstar and Jimmy Collier. The former, while working for a Boston booking agency, had set up the New England coast concerts which had marked the Clearwater's sail from Maine to New York. Arkansas-born Jimmy Collier had been doing community organizing for some time. He had worked with the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference and later with Martin Luther King. Jimmy had joined the "movement" at Selma, Alabama, and had been singled out very quickly because of his dynamic leadership qualities. Reverend Frederick Douglas Kirkpatrick, the other musician-organizer on Dr. King's staff, had been on the Clearwater's delivery crew and had encouraged Jimmy to join up with the Clearwater during the summer of 1969. From that point, Collier's abilities to communicate well with different social groups made him an obvious choice for a Hudson River Sloop Restoration "advance man".

The task facing Jimmy and Lesta was an enormous one. The results were almost predictably uneven. At some towns along the river there were local groups already interested in the Clearwater and already committed to environmental reform, Hudson River Sloop Restoration, and the idea of waterfront festivals. These groups were somewhat loosely official and, depending upon their degree of organization, were sometimes known as "sloop clubs". In other localities, the interest and atmosphere ranged from non-receptive to lukewarm.

The festivals were all very different. At times they were very "establishment": long skirts, sport-coats, lawn chairs, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic playing Handel Water Music. At other times they were very "alternative": body painting, electric music, street dancing, Spanish-speaking masters-of-ceremonies. The greatest festivals, as



festivals go, were the ones with the greatest mixture of both extremes. In one sense, the festivals presented the onlooker with a fairly good view of the face of America: the structure of the festivals, like the composition of Hudson River Sloop Restoration itself, was a cross-section of all the strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, prejudices, and conflicts of our society. All of them were interesting, each for a different reason.

The first festival of the season, held on the thirteenth of June, at Cold Spring, New York, had special interest from a political point of view. The Hudson Valley, once a series of large estates owned by a few extremely wealthy people, had become, first because of sloop trade and later because of railroad commerce, a series of small towns, each with a Main Street, a Broadway, and a population composed mainly of working-class people. As Reverend Bill Reisman, a Cold Spring Episcopal minister interviewed in the composition of this study suggested, though the valley is just outside New York City, it is basically middle-America. The political atmosphere in many of these towns is conservative, leaning, at times, toward reactionary. Cold Spring is perhaps among the nearest to the far right.

The Hudson Valley has had a history of small volatile right wing - left wing skirmishes, the best known of these being perhaps, the "Peekskill Riots" in August of 1949. At that time an attempt was made to block an open-air concert which was to be given by Paul Robeson, the well known actor

and singer. Robeson was outspoken in his views on civil rights and the plight of the black American. An American Legion-backed crowd blocked traffic, paraded in front of the stage, and harassed performers. The concert was postponed until the following Sunday. What looked like a successful rescheduling ended in disaster. Autos and buses exiting from the festival area along a narrow road were stoned from the woods. Cars were overturned, windows smashed, and over one hundred people injured. Local police did little to intervene; in fact, New York State Police arrested the son of the Peekskill chief of police for overturning automobiles, and some alleged that local police aided the rioters by re-routing cars and improper use of two-way radios.<sup>1</sup>

Added to this sort of local history was the fact that the Hudson River Sloop Restoration office was located at Cold Spring. Local nay-sayers were thereby provided with a constant source of incident for criticism since the sloop workers, whose dress, attitudes, and actions they found generally objectionable were regularly on the streets of the town.

Finally, and probably most abrasive to the self-appointed vigilantes, was the presence of Pete Seeger. Seeger's appearance before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the summer of 1955 provoked years of black-listing aimed directly at undermining his career.<sup>2</sup> For Seeger, the committee's subtle method of denigrating insinuation resulted in not only lack of access to public media, but also a long line of confrontations with self-righteous

"citizen's groups" in any of a number of places, and most significantly, for present purposes, in the Hudson Valley itself.

On the day of the Cold Spring festival, argumentative conservatives bouyed up by a group of strong reactionaries began, around mid-afternoon, to make their presence known. At first there was merely some altercation. Arguments began with crew members over the incidents of the night before when the Clearwater had been stoned after dark and forced to anchor off-shore. As the evening program was about to begin, members of this group of townspeople began gathering in larger numbers. Insinuating looks were cast at sloop volunteers. Remarks like, "I'm going to handle this one," or, "This guy won't put up much of a fight," were mumbled just audibly enough to be provocative. Pebbles began to be thrown. The Hudson Valley Philharmonic, which had been scheduled to perform, took to the platform at last and the evening program began.

People began drifting past the gazebo onto the spacious pier. The scene was a colorful one: women wearing long skirts with bright patterns, men with sport-coats and summer shoes, lawn chairs, pennants waving, the sun setting across the river over the beautiful palisades, an open-air tavern with tall steins of beer served on outdoor, umbrella-covered tables, Handel's Water Music from the bandstand. When the program was near to completion Seeger was invited up to the stage by the conductor to say a few words about Hudson River Sloop Restoration. A short general description of the Clearwater

and its purpose was given. As Pete began the plea for contributions and memberships a "plant" in the audience shouted, "If it's a non-profit organization, what are you collecting money for?"

Seeger began responding calmly: "The festival you see here this weekend, and the maintenance of the Clearwater is the work of hard-working, dedicated volunteers who work without pay. For the purposes of safety, the Clearwater has a paid captain and first mate...."

He never finished. To loud shouts and drum beats, a flag-waving group appeared on shore and began marching across the pier and through the assembled audience. At the head of the group were several men with "hard hats" (the scene occurred several weeks after the famous nationally-telecast "hard hat" - peace demonstrator riot at City Hall in New York City.) Others carried a twenty foot banner. Inscribed on the face of it were the words, "Clean up the Hudson - Get rid of Pollution Pete."

There was much shouting, running about, and popping of flash bulbs. One woman screaming hysterically, "It's the Germans! It's the Germans! I've seen them before; it's the Germans!", had to be helped away. Threats were hurled, and at the moment that it seemed violence was about to break out, the orchestra struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner". The demonstrators were momentarily stalled. Not sure whether to salute "their anthem, or storm the stage and kill the "commies", they applauded and booed at the same time.

Some waved flags, others fists. The confusion went on just long enough to allow local, state, and county police to surround the mob and stave off violence. Some of the more belligerent demonstrators had to be carried off. The anger of the remainder slowly cooled over the next couple of hours. Shouting ensued on every side. One group argued with Seeger:

"Just tell me if you're a communist."

"I'm about as much of a communist as the American Indian."

"Why are you always singing those foreign songs?"

"I sing, 'Guantanamera'; that's a song about a man who loves his country. You don't think there's anything wrong with a man loving his country, do you?"

"Well, why don't you sing some songs about America?"

"I sing, 'This Land Is Your Land'."

"Yeah, I think that's alright. But why don't you sing something like, 'In The Good Old Summertime'?"

"Yes, I like that song:

'In the good old summertime,  
In the good old summertime..."

"No! Don't sing it now!"

And so it went for a half-hour until Cold Spring police escorted Seeger to his car and off the festival site.

Volunteers stayed on for another two hours collecting scraps of paper and cigarette butts. (No festival site was ever left even slightly littered.) The season was off to a stormy beginning.

Not all the festivals were large affairs. Some, such as the one at Coxsackie, New York, were small one-day, mid-week stops. Occasionally a festival would be tied to a formal concert such as at Catskill, New York, where Pete Seeger did a benefit for the Boy Scouts.

Some festivals were exciting for the amount of local flavor involved. The September 5-6 festival at the Ninty-sixth Street Boat Basin in New York City was typical of this type of sloop stop. Much of the local organizing was done by the "Hey-Brother! -Coffee House", a branch of the Many Races Cultural Foundation. The exhibits at that festival had a local quality to them since they dealt almost entirely with problems of New York City air and water pollution, housing, sewage control, parks, and recreation. Jimmy Collier, master of ceremonies for the beginning part of the musical program, humorously offered a cash prize of ten dollars to anyone who could identify any of his or her own raw waste as it flowed out of a nearby Department of Sanitation open sewage pipe.

Both that festival and the one on Labor Day at the riverside park on West 125th Street had a "street" quality to them. Since it was located on the outskirts of West Harlem, there was more black attendance than there generally was at many of the festivals farther up the valley. This made for some wonderful differences in the festivities themselves. There were stands selling "soul food", a good deal of electric music, interesting body-painting booths, square-dancing to banjo-guitar combos during a temporary power black-out in the afternoon, and "soul" dancing to rock ensembles at night.

The festivals which would probably be judged most successful in terms on the original goal of Hudson River Sloop

Restoration were those which blended together the most varied activities and ideals; of these, perhaps the most memorable was held at Poughkeepsie on August 1-2. One reason for its success was the presence and organizing energy of a local "sloop club". A sloop club was a group of people from some particular area in the Hudson Valley which met perhaps once a month, and sponsored picnics, fund raisings, and other such events to help carry on its own affairs and to help organize the sloop festival which would be held each summer in that area. The Poughkeepsie group was particularly energetic and got together a very fine festival.

To put the music program together they enlisted the help of Toshi Seeger, film-maker, potter, trustee of several cultural foundations, and wife of Pete Seeger. Toshi's ability to get people working together was a significant asset in the evolvment of the whole sloop project. In this case the Poughkeepsie Sloop Club was calling upon her talent at concert programming, a complicated undertaking involving a thorough knowledge of performers, audiences, sound equipment, and even weather.

As it was designed, there were two music programs operating simultaneously during the day. At the main stage, there was a good deal of electric music, congo-drum bands, and dancing. At the second stage a long line of solo folk-musicians performed for people waiting on long lines to board and inspect the Clearwater. There were numerous displays dealing with a variety of local, national, and

international ecological problems: some indicated how much of the American tax dollar went into the "all out war on pollution"; others indicated the condition of the earth's water, air, and natural resources; some others indicated the need for parks in the Hudson Valley. Some pinpointed every known source of Hudson River pollution, the type and quantity of their discharges, and the appropriate cost of abatement.



Interspersed throughout the program were speakers talking on political problems such as housing and voting, and on scientific problems such as water pollution abatement and nuclear power plant virtues and vices. At night the Hudson Valley Philharmonic performed a program of classical music which concluded with a rock-gospel oratorio. After that, and simultaneous with one another, there was an informal folk-jazz program on the main stage, a slide show nearer the river



beneath some trees, and a rock music program in another part of the field. The Sunday part of the festival featured a morning church service with a variety of clergymen, musicians, and public speakers as participants.

While one part of the program attracted more of a suburban, middle-class crowd, and another, a more downtown, working-class crowd, it is significant that the festival, as a whole, was attended by all kinds and ages of people, and that all audiences were widely mixed - racially, culturally, and socially.



By the end of the summer of 1970 the conflicts inherent in Hudson River Sloop Restoration's composition were drawn to an irritating climax. Those in the organization who were interested in the Clearwater as primarily a sailing vessel had been agitating all summer for fewer festivals,



fewer day-sails (space permitting, all Hudson River Sloop Restoration members were entitled to sail on the Clearwater), and less frequent public inspection. Those who were interested in the Clearwater as primarily an organizing tool were almost constantly defending the boat's numerous appearances and the importance of public accessibility. Then, there were those, interested in the sloop as primarily an educative tool which would lead the rank-and-file Hudson Valley resident to a greater level of ecological awareness. Finally, there were those who sought to "clean up" the sloop organization by returning it to its more simple past, reviving, perhaps, more of the small, club-like atmosphere which was part of its beginning. The fact that these divergent forces were to reach some sort of showdown was inevitable. The fact that the organization was capable of surviving that showdown is a tribute to both the natural buoyancy in the original conception of the project and the basic willingness of the people involved to listen to one another's ideas - at times, submerging individual interests to the general well-being of the group.

The weekends of August 22-23, and 29-30, were perhaps the most convulsive in the early years of Hudson River Sloop Restoration. More than anything, they put to the test the basic formulation of the organization. In the short history of the Clearwater, never did it seem less likely that different kinds of people could work together on a common project; never, in fact, did the American egalitarian basis of the sloop project seem more absurd than during those two weeks.

- 1 R. Serge Denisoff, "Radical Consciousness and Social Sanctions: The Case of People's Songs and Artists Inc." unpublished paper presented at annual meeting of American Studies Ass., Toledo, Ohio, October, 1969, pp. 15-16. A good discussion of the events all around the incident is in Howard Fast, Peekskill USA, New York, 1951.
- 2 It is interesting to note that in spite of the fact that some of Seeger's songs are known all over the world and have been translated into over twenty languages, there are few Americans who even know he wrote them. (cf. "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" and "If I Had A Hammer")

VI

"You know...we've got orders to leave tonight and to get the boat to Storm King Mountain by ten o'clock tomorrow morning...It was one of these deals where four dudes on the board got together and rammed this through - four people with their own idea came in and usurped the whole organization and have done something most undemocratic. What kind of group do you have when four people can run that kind of thing through?"

Captain Jim Oestergard  
August 23, 1970



Our casual visitor who had watched the Clearwater sail across from New Jersey and tie up at Morton Street Pier on that Friday evening, the twenty-first of August very likely returned sometime early Saturday afternoon to see what this "Hudson River Sloop Festival" was all about. If he arrived early enough, he would have been in time to watch volunteer workers unload exhibits from the thirty-foot display trailer which had been rolled into place the evening before. According to a plan drawn up by free-lance artist and Hudson Valley resident Natalie Hofman, seven-foot-tall panels were fastened one to another until a giant, honey-comb exhibit had been constructed which covered some three-hundred square feet.



Most probably, our visitor walked casually among these panels. Each of them dramatized one or another problem facing our

environment: air pollution, thermal pollution, the vanishing population of fish, the vanishing tax dollar.



Here were graffiti panels where his child could contribute his or her own view of the problems facing our land; there were booths and displays put together by the local sloop club and other interested organizations. At each exhibit were several workers standing-by ready to discuss the display and the problem it dramatized.

That afternoon an informal hootenany was held. For all the young singers and songwriters eager for a performance before a New York crowd, it was an especially important part of the weekend. If our casual visitor so wished, he could have joined in on the choruses.

If he stayed around late enough, he would have watched Morton Street Pier fill up with a couple of thousand people,





and sitting among them, he would have enjoyed one of the many free folk-music concerts sponsored by Hudson River Sloop Restoration that summer.



For the young and wish-they-were-young there was Suzi Lynn, the vantriloquist-puppeteer from Detroit via Boston, and her little wooden-headed friend, Audry. For music with a popular sound there was Don McLean who, after a half-dozen tunes, was encored back to the stage to re-sing the opening song, "Everybody Loves Me Baby, What's the Matter With You?" For the topical song-oriented, there was Jimmy Collier singing, "Do You Want Your Freedom?" There were local musicians of every sort; and, for a bit of everything, there was Pete Seeger. For the thousand-thousandth time some youngster in the front of the crowd shouted, "Sing 'Abiyoyo'!" And for the thousand-thousandth time, Pete

danced up and down, back and forth, weaving the wonderful tale about the father with the magic wand, the boy with the ukelele, and the giant with the foolish grin.

It was a beautiful concert. Pete Seeger concluded the program by asking for all the floodlights to be turned off and leading the two-thousand members of the audience in a chorus of "America the Beautiful". The audience, Morton Street Pier, Seeger, and the Clearwater were gently washed in the soft light of the full moon. Behind the singer, to his left as the audience watched him, stood the Statue of Liberty, her lamp lifted in a promise once made to all Americans, and in fact, to all the citizens of the world. It was a very moving scene. It was a very beautiful concert.

By Sunday morning, the Morton Street Festival had touched upon every beautiful thing for which the Clearwater stood. There had been gaiety, music, song, education, and the confluence of thousands of dissimilar people. They had met, talked together, sang together. Amongst the sloop workers there had been the camaraderie and sense of purpose for which they had left homes and jobs and had traveled long distances to find. Some had been up late the night before at a party given by one of the New York Sloop Club members. There had been drinks, sandwiches, and showers for any tired and dirty after a long day's work.

As the morning sun climbed higher in the sky people slowly began rising and getting things in order for the Sunday afternoon festivities. There were to be a couple of

special happenings today. For one thing, the Clearwater was to go out on a day-sail. Most of the passengers would be members of the New York Sloop Club which was hosting the festival. Another different sort of event was to be a video-taping by a crew flown over by French educational television.

For the most part, the day seemed to pass rather smoothly. The Clearwater slowly pulled away from the dock under a sunny sky with just the right amount of wind. Passengers milled around the deck while interviewers listened to Pete Seeger and Jimmy Collier talk and sing, "We've Got To Learn To Love Our River Again!"

Evening came on and the Clearwater returned to Morton Street. As the festival drew to a close, the crowds dwindled, exhibits were packed away, tired workers found rides back to the mid-Hudson region, and the French television people got set for a long flight home. For our casual visitor, it had been a good weekend.

But our casual visitor, remember, had missed the tone of the discussions on the Clearwater deck Friday around supertime. He hadn't been in on the nervous conversations held intermittently all day Saturday at coffee-shops half-a-dozen blocks from the festival site. Nor had he caught the inferences during the procedural discussions among the volunteers and the Clearwater crew all during the day on Sunday.

Superficially, the brewing conflict centered around the scheduling of the Clearwater itself. In a broader sense,

however, disagreement over the where-about and what-about of the boat was really symptomatic of the conflict arising out of the divergent backgrounds and aims of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's individual members. The immediate problem was what the boat was to be doing on Monday morning, August 24.

For some years, the Consolidated Edison Company had been trying to get final license to construct a nuclear power plant at Storm King Mountain. In the entire one hundred and fifty miles that marks the main flow of the Hudson River from Albany to New York there is probably no section more beautiful than the Hudson Highlands - the area directly surrounding Storm King.



Washington Irving, looking on the Catskills from the north end of the Highlands, singled out this region long ago:



Never shall I forget the effect upon me of the first view of them predominating over a wide extent of country, partly wild, woody, and rugged; part softened away into all the graces of cultivation. As we slowly floated along, I lay on the deck and watched them through a long summer's day, undergoing a thousand mutations under the magical effects of atmosphere; sometimes seeming to approach, at other times to recede; now almost melting into hazy distance, now burnished by the setting sun, until in the evening, they printed themselves against the glowing sky<sup>1</sup> in the deep purple of an Italian landscape.

Of all the sites that Consolidated Edison might have proposed, none was so likely to be opposed by valley residents more violently or more bitterly. Scenic Hudson, an organization of ecologically concerned citizens, had gathered forces to meet this challenge to the local environment. For some it was an ideological battle: a Scenic Hudson flyer notes:

Con Ed wants to build a pumped storage hydroelectric plant on Storm King Mountain on the Hudson River. What happens at Storm King affects you. In our ten years of defense of Storm King Mountain and the Hudson Highlands, our case in the courts provided much of the impetus for what are now nationwide measures to protect the environment.<sup>2</sup>

For others, involvement was more pragmatic. Helene Duffy recounts:

We were all just beginning to get involved with the fight for the environment via the Storm King fight. Usually, people get involved for personal-type reasons. I got involved because Con Edison wanted to put a two hundred foot tower at the end of my driveway!<sup>3</sup>

The Consolidated Edison - citizen ecologist battle had been in and out of the state courts for years. At last the Atomic Energy Commission decided to send several representatives to inspect the site personally. The day chosen

for the inspection was August 24, 1970. It was the thinking of those members of Hudson River Sloop Restoration who were concerned with the Clearwater as primarily an environmental-awareness educating tool, that the Clearwater should be under full-sail in the Storm King vicinity while the area was being inspected. Alexander Saunders expressed the group's thinking in this way:

The desire to have the sloop sailing in the Hudson Valley that day, up in the Hudson Highlands, was that there was a group from the Federal Power Commission itself that was up here inspecting the territory because the Con Ed thing was so serious and was being fought so hard by Scenic Hudson.

I will take full responsibility for the request that the sloop be up here and be in motion under sail so that it would be seen by the Federal Power Commission to demonstrate the fact that the old [Currier and Ives] pictures were true, and that they had a validity; that this was a scenic area, that this was a recreation area.

Unfortunately, maybe all the background of that thought didn't get through to all the people that were responsible for moving the boat, and it was really muffed from the standpoint of the sloop being in motion. The objective was to have the boat under sail making the pictures come true. It wasn't possible for the people on board the boat to know just when they were being looked at by the people from the Federal Power Commission because we didn't know ourselves exactly when they'd be where, and how they'd be. We thought they might be flying in a plane.

It did seem like an arbitrary exercise, but it might have contributed quite a bit to the Scenic Hudson case as far as an appearance of the fact that this was a recreation area in exercise, being exercised as such, being used as such, and that the sloop was an image from the past that they<sub>4</sub> just wouldn't see again except right here.

At the same time, there were Hudson River Sloop Restoration members, concerned primarily with the Clearwater as a sailing vessel, who thought differently. Fed up with the

over-crowded "day sails", the seemingly impossible schedule of appearances the Clearwater was supposed to make, the consequent pile-up of missed days off for the sloop's officials, and the lack of scheduled days for much-needed maintenance work, these sailor-members were infuriated at the idea of having to move the Clearwater from Morton Street Pier to Storm King Mountain overnight.



In this particular case, since the festival and scheduled sails did not end until around seven on Sunday evening, that gave the crew only until the next morning to make the sixty mile trip. For another thing, the tides were such that the sail could not be profitably begun until about 3:30 Monday morning. The lack of wind at that time of night, and the actual time necessary to move the Clearwater made motoring the only way the trip was even possible. The



physical dynamics of moving against the tide and of motoring for that distance made the whole sail, from a nautical point of view, a poor idea. For the "boat people", it was just one more decision dumped upon them by a governing board whom they felt were not concerned with what Hudson River Sloop Restoration was "really about", i.e., the construction and maintenance of the Clearwater - a beautiful sailing vessel.

The confrontation between these two groups might have been averted if the Clearwater had been able to move on Sunday; but since the "festival people" had made the Clearwater's presence necessary at Morton Street on Sunday for the day-sail, the television taping, and the sybolic hosting of the festival, that possibility was ruled out.

As it turned out, the Clearwater motored up the Hudson to Storm King at 3:30 in the morning, but not without some grave disagreement. Fundamentally, the controversy tended to throw into sharp relief the variant ideological concerns of Hudson River Sloop Restoration members. Was the point of Hudson River Sloop Restoration to build and sail a replica of the beautiful boats that had traveled the river in days gone by? Was the point of Hudson River Sloop Restoration to attract public attention by dramatizing the difference between the natural beauty of the Hudson Valley and what Pete Seeger called "the stinking mess" which had been made of it? Was the point of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, as some would have it, to operate the Clearwater as a kind of private yacht and, by using it to court politicians and other

influential people, thereby gain a very special kind of personal political power in the Hudson Valley? Was the point of Hudson River Sloop Restoration to get people, by use of a brilliant symbol or tool, to talk to one another, work with one another, perhaps even care about one another's problems? Or was it the point of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, as some others felt, to do most of these things simultaneously? Unfortunately, for the time being, there was no consensus in answering these questions. Fortunately, however, for the long run of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, there were enough optimistic individuals who thought the Clearwater could do many different things to pull the organization through the crisis.

During the week between the Morton Street Festival (August 22-23) and the Nyack Festival (August 29-30) even the most clear-thinking members of Hudson River Sloop Restoration were having trouble thinking clearly. Each ideological position was attacked on every side, tempers were rubbed raw, patience was in short supply.

By the time the week which ended with the Nyack Festival was over, it seemed almost miraculous that there was an organization left at all. During the course of the week Mike Micinowski, executive director of Hudson River Sloop Restoration resigned from his position unwilling to face, any longer, the multiple, and at times, contradictory pressures upon him. Captain Jim Oestergard made it known that he would like to be relieved of any further responsibility in

directing the Clearwater's day-to-day activity. Lesta Morningstar was making it pretty clear that she would be glad when the season was over. Jimmy Collier was having difficulties with his strongest supporters. Volunteers, wide-eyed and optimistic in June, were wondering why they had ever gotten involved in the first place; looking around themselves at so much disagreement and negativism, they were ready to leave immediately with little prompting. Pete Seeger, who had spent a good deal of his life defending causes of various types, paying the price of putting his career on the line for his values, was being called "establishment" for something so simple as trying to head off a confrontation over a docking site. By Saturday, long-time sloop workers who had been with the Clearwater since its beginning, attended the Nyack Festival literally holding back tears over the mess things were in.

Of all those visibly concerned with what was going on, Pete Seeger alone had the clear sight and optimism to speak positively that weekend. If our casual visitor from Morton Street had taken the thirty mile drive up the New York State Thruway and across the Tappan Zee Bridge to Nyack, he probably would have been fascinated once again by what looked like another wonderful sloop festival. He probably wouldn't have noticed Pete Seeger running back and forth from this disgruntled worker, to that down-cast volunteer, to that other long-time sloop-chaser now in tears. He probably would not have noticed how the master-of-ceremonies came running

over to Seeger shouting, "Five minutes, Pete!"; nor would he have watched how Pete spent that five minutes trying to patch up a lot of shattered ideals and heavy hearts, running from one person to another and finally, with a jump, up onto the stage. Most likely, our casual visitor would have found a spot of grass directly in front of the stage, and with a heart banging with excitement, would have listened as Pete began: "Friends, all you see here today is the work of a dedicated group of hard-working volunteers. Hudson River Sloop Restoration is an argumentative group of conservative oldsters, bearded students, youths from the ghetto, farmers, teachers, housewives, teenagers, and small town merchants. They probably disagree on a thousand things, but they're united in one idea: to sail a beautiful boat from town to town to help their fellow citizens to learn to love their river again."

Somehow, the songs that followed, songs of participation and hope, made a louder sound than the complaints and sobs that went up behind the stage. Somehow, in the magic that seemed always to surround the Clearwater, the festival ended on a note of hope. The wonderful Helen Hayes spoke a few glowing words about the Clearwater and its mission. Giant squares formed across the whole festival field and the day ended with hundreds of people gayly dancing to the music of half-a-dozen musicians who jumped up on the stage and played together for the first time. Even in the minds and hearts of the downcast workers there was confusion:

what was really real, - their complaints which, all of a sudden, seemed so petty, or the magic of Helen Hayes and of hundreds of people, arm in arm, dancing to the sounds of banjos and fiddles?



- 1 Washington Irving, op. cit., p.76.
- 2 "Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference", Scenic Hudson publication, document 1.
- 3 Helene Duffy, tape transcript, original copy.
- 4 Ander Saunders, tape transcript, edited copy, sec. 2.







## VII

"Six PM, waiting for the sloop. She's a beautiful sight out on the river - peaceful and peace loving. But like the rest of the world, full of stress, some rot (literally!) and turmoil. With the chaos today, we were naive to think she would be otherwise. All of us previously existed on our own little planets - our paths would probably never have crossed, until the Clearwater.

So we've hit a crisis, mainly through lack of communication on everyone's part. And many of us are reacting on our own without talking it out, without trying to understand each other, without finding out what each has to give and less worry about our points of difference.

As...said on the phone today, all his friends are watching to see how the Clearwater solves its problems. They think of it as a miniature world. If we can't, then there's little hope."

Toshi Seeger, Summer 1970



One more festival in Manhattan (September 5-6) ended the Clearwater's 1970 season. The week between Nyack and Manhattan was filled with more confusion than the one before. While, on the one hand, emergency meetings were held to try to decide how, if at all, Hudson River Sloop Restoration was to continue, new people were discovering for the first time the beauty and wonder of the sloop project as originally conceived. Susan Crane, a sixteen-year-old volunteer crew member, recounts:

You'd meet all kinds on there; it varied. It made it more interesting and you found that even though there were people you didn't like, they could still all work together. We just had a great time doing everything and nobody minded working...

It was the first time I'd ever pitched in and done something. I felt really good about it because I felt like I was doing something and it was worth something and it means a lot. It was like nobody was begrudging the fact that they had to help - just lots of people working together on a common cause and having a good time at it. 1

In spite of everything else, the September 5-6 festival on New York City's upper west side, was one of the most successful and widely attended of the whole summer. People did come to the river, did hear the Clearwater's message; nevertheless, some in Hudson River Sloop Restoration felt "so what'.

Discord, running as deep as that which had characterized the preceeding two weeks, was not to be settled by any sort of festival, no matter how beautiful. Forces gathered for a general confrontation which would take place at the annual membership meeting to be held on November 15 in Poughkeepsie.

Although, superficially, disagreement had centered around boat usage with ecologists criticizing boat people criticizing festival organizers criticizing ecologists, the real division of perspective lay much deeper. Basically, one group was saying something like:

We have worked hard to raise money and build a beautiful boat. The boat is a wonderful symbol of a bygone era. Let us preserve, by judicious usage, the beauty of that boat and let us use it to teach people to love their river.

The other group was saying something like:

There is a giant problem facing mankind: survival. If the human race is to see the twenty-first century, it is going to have to adequately deal with a number of pressing issues: world peace, civil liberties, the pollution of our environment, the problems of our cities, the question of economic balance. Here we have a boat that can bring together people of different backgrounds and ideologies. Perhaps if we come together and discuss things, we may come up with some answers or, at least "agree to disagree".

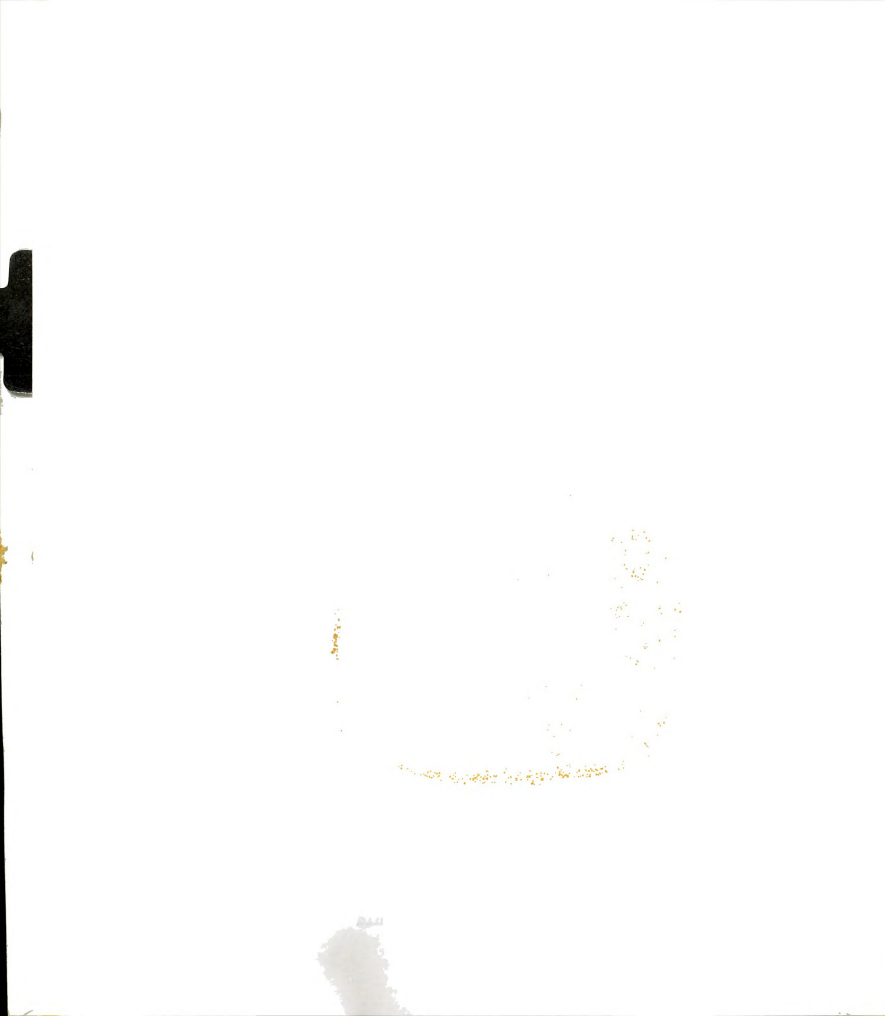
The conflict of interests inherent in these two positions is more real than immediately apparent. It is, as the Reverend Bill Riesman suggested, "an American problem". More than that, it is the problem inherent in the American brand of democracy: what happens to the ideas and rights of minority interest groups when the majority rules? At its most fundamental level, the conflict here was one between paternalism and egalitarianism.

The "paternalists" in the organization were basically conservationists. They had joined Hudson River Sloop Restoration for preservationist reasons. They were historians who loved to see these old boats and to dream of a bygone

day when the Hudson River was dotted with their sails. Others from among this group were interested in the Hudson itself. They hoped through Hudson River Sloop Restoration to bring about that sort of political pressure which would get industry and municipalities along the valley to do something about their roles as polluting agents. They hoped through Hudson River Sloop Restoration to dramatize the need for conservation efforts in not only the river, but in the swamps and streams that made up the greater Hudson River system. The political pressure which this group hoped to bring about was to be accomplished basically through what we might call "teaching".



People could come and look at the boat, learn something of its history, listen to ecologist-speakers, perform pollution probes. Hudson River Sloop Restoration would assume the



role of an instructor.

The "egalitarians", on the other hand, were basically political activists. They had found their way to Hudson River Sloop Restoration through avenues such as community organizing and topical music. For these members the Clearwater was basically a tool, a means of access to civic groups, media, the rank and file resident of the Hudson Valley. Once this sort of access was made available, it could be used to point up not only the state of our environmental system, but of our social system as well. The bringing together of different kinds of people, which a project like a Clearwater festival could do so well, was a natural teaching device, a microcosmic field study in communication and human understanding.



Many of the sloop workers actually fell partly into both

categories. Some of them moved through different phases during the course of their involvement with Hudson River Sloop Restoration. A study of the early years of Hudson River Sloop Restoration is, in fact, a study of a whole organization going through different phases of self-realization. The fact that it experienced such growing pains as it did is, in a sense, a tribute to its vitality and fertility.

Both groups which have been described had teaching as their fundamental goal, and further, teaching through dramatization. Disagreement came primarily over what was to be taught and how it was to be dramatized. The conservationist group wanted to stick mainly to the fundamentals. The original incorporating charter of Hudson River Sloop Restoration had billed the organization as a non-profit educational project dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of knowledge about Hudson River sloops with an overall hope of getting people, through actual contact with the waterfront, to learn to love their river again. The activist group disagreed with this only in the matter of method. They felt that large gala festivals, calling on a variety of community groups for assistance, and attracting all sorts of people, was a better way of going about it.

To support their variant organizational models, the groups had differing views on management. The preservationists envisioned an organization with a strong central office where policy decisions would be made, handed out, and followed by workers. Central to this system was an "executive director"



and his or her assistants. All officers under this system were to be hired by the board of directors of Hudson River Sloop Restoration and funded with organization money. Each worker, then, was specifically responsible for certain jobs which she or he was expected to perform competently. Thus, power was to be centralized in the main office at Cold Spring and in the captain's cabin aboard the Clearwater. Responsibilities would be delegated specifically; each worker would know his or her own place and job.

The activists' working model was quite different. While the executive director was still responsible for official day-to-day organizational decisions, and the captain answerable for the Clearwater's well-being, different jobs and responsibilities would be overseen by the workers themselves. In addition, it was hoped that the organization would be able to make wide use of volunteer help. This would both keep operating expenses down and extend the circle of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's actual involvement. Officials of the organization would give final approval to projects, but the projects themselves could be both envisioned and carried out by volunteers.

In practice, both systems and both groups worked together simultaneously in the early days of the sloop project. By mid-1970, however, co-existence was beginning to be a problem. The tightly-controlled organizational model of the preservationists failed to respond fully and quickly enough to the proposals and recommendations of the workers in the

"field" and to the demands and needs of the communities and of the media. Meanwhile, the de-centralized system of the activists was covering too much ground too fast. Both groups too often lost sight of ends in their struggle for means.

Any number of aspects of Hudson River Sloop Restoration as it operated in 1970 showed the strain of an organization weakened by disagreement. There was, for example, the question of the exhibit trailer. Originally it was thought that this thirty foot trailer could provide good shore support for the Clearwater's activities.



The idea was that it could precede the Clearwater into the various communities by several days. Volunteers could be on hand to fold out the giant sides displaying the maps and photographs on the panels. Small supporting exhibits could be erected and a volunteer could answer questions,



talk with visitors, and be a sort of ambassador of good will and advance man for the coming sloop festival as well. Child as this was of the organization's activist thinking, it was doomed to be under the constant criticism of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's more conservative members.

First, it was argued that the organization could ill-afford to buy and operate such a trailer effectively. More optimistic members argued that the money would come in just as funds to build the Clearwater had two years earlier. As for operation, volunteers could handle the project, thereby cutting to a minimum actual operating expenses.

The preservationists, however, wanted as little to do with volunteer help as possible. For one thing, it decentralized authority; for another, volunteers were looked on by some as "hangers-on". Some of the critics of volunteers questioned why these individuals were not gainfully employed elsewhere instead of "hanging around the Hudson Valley". This was rather unfair criticism; some of the volunteers were professionals in their own fields, whether musicians, artists, or seamen. Some took on responsibilities such as community organizing, trailer operation, display design and construction, press relations, boat maintenance, benefit concerts, and the like which, had the organization been forced to fund them, would not have been possible. While it might be argued by some that many of the volunteer projects were unwanted anyway, there can be little doubt when objectively viewed that Hudson River Sloop Restoration as a venture

would have been impossible without the enormous amount of energy it derived from unpaid assistants of every sort. Perhaps the real question was over which volunteers were acceptable, and at what point in time. A higher priority, for example, would be given to help offered by a cabinet maker, an electrician, or a professional artist. The proceeds from a Pete Seeger benefit concert were always acceptable. On the other hand, the generalized willingness-to-help expressed by a long-haired college freshman on leave from his or her university was, by some officials, taken for granted. At times, this sort of discrimination was implied, at other times, expressed. One official commented:

What we don't need to save the Hudson is a bunch of filthy long-haired characters who don't know what the hell they're talking about and who couldn't get into an environmental conference,<sup>2</sup> let alone know what to say or what to do.

In the typical contradiction which surrounded Hudson River Sloop Restoration, this same individual was generally favorably impressed by the assortment of volunteer help which made itself available to the Clearwater.

Actually, the volunteer question probably had more to do with unauthorized personnel and the consequent decentralization of authority than with anything else. There was a running battle, for example, between the official position on crew assignments and the actual arrangement by which the crew operated onboard the Clearwater. According to official Hudson River Sloop Restoration policy, crew members were expected to arrive on a Sunday evening, attend

a kind of sailing seminar, and then perform a variety of duties during their stay on the Clearwater. These duties included cooking, scrubbing, painting, hauling up sails, and a whole variety of operational and maintenance chores peculiar to the business of sailing.



Crew members were what might be called officially-sanctioned volunteers. Applicants for crew positions were expected to submit a certain form which would be processed by the central office. It was generally hoped that all interested would get a turn for a week's assignment, and some attention, which varied in kind, was paid to trying to get a crew with as mixed a background as possible. More than one crewmember singled out his or her week aboard the Clearwater as the most exciting of their entire life. Crewing on board the Clearwater was educational in the widest sense of



the word. One had to learn to get along with other workers. In a ship's tight quarters there is no place for one person to escape from another; moreover, most jobs aboard ship (hauling up a mainsail is a good example) require the combined effort of a number of people. It is good practice to learn to get along with the person hauling next to you; for one thing, one's life might depend upon it.

In regard to the Clearwater, conflict between official position and the actual method of procedure arose after particular crew members' assignments were completed, or when some volunteers showed up without an actual assignment. Many volunteers "illegally" stayed around and helped after their official stay was over. Official policy on this point was often compromised for the sake of the valuable jobs some of the volunteer crew performed. Since these unassigned workers were water-borne versions of the "land crew" volunteers being questioned in other places, the same attacks, both explicit and implicit, were leveled against them also: why weren't they somewhere working? What good were most of them doing aboard the Clearwater? Pejorative statements of various kinds were made. Some alleged that the Clearwater was little better than a "floating commune", or "floating hippie pad".

Basic to all these criticisms was again the protectionist stance taken by one body of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's membership. "Extra" people, hanging around without specific, assigned functions, tended to decentralize





authority and vary the complexion of the organization's image. It was alleged that the "hippie types" were unfriendly, ignored visitors to the Clearwater, and dragged down the organization's image as a whole.



Some criticism of this group may be founded in fact. Sam Sunshine, village barber, and a highly respected, longtime resident of Cold Spring, when questioned about the general negative attitude toward Hudson River Sloop Restoration evident in Cold Spring, put the general onus on the backs of the group in question:

The people that were on that boat created that ill feeling right here in the community - right here in this community, and probably in other communities too...When this group came in here the natives felt they were being looked down upon and pressured into something they didn't want...Now then, if they hadn't had that crew that they had on the boat in the beginning who went around looking for trouble...went around antagonizing the young ex-military men - the military men were probably

throwing threats too, but (the sloop people) were throwing threats also instead of just taking it and not saying anything and forgetting about it and walking away from it...

The situation has gotten out of hand... We saw these people on this boat walking up and down Main Street half naked and everything else. People of the community don't do that kind of stuff.<sup>3</sup>

Part of the criticism of sloop volunteers as aloof and unfriendly must be accounted for in what long-time sloop official, and Poughkeepsie businessman Len Bard calls the "American Legion attitude", an "anti-intellectual" tone evident, to some extent, throughout the Hudson Valley and especially in Cold Spring. On the other hand, Susan Crane, a volunteer from Westchester County, who, in fact, saw herself as part of the "floating commune" group recounts:

It was like a floating commune. We had a great time. Everybody shared the work...

We were having a great time: people swinging from the ropes and whatever...

There was also the whole feeling of belonging to something. When you were on the sloop you were part of the crew and that made you something special. There was a kind of swagger that most of the kids had...and you'd go ashore and people would ask things about the boat and you could give them the answers and you could say: "Yeah, yeah, I'm crewing on the Clearwater now."

Implicit in this is the unwitting admission that at least some volunteers considered themselves as somewhat apart from the general public. In fact, when this elitism was mentioned in an interview with another long-time sloop supporter, he straightforwardly declared that crew members' superiority was not a matter of viewpoint, but rather a fact!<sup>5</sup>

The best tack in the official handling of the situation

might well have been for the anti-volunteers to realize the conservative bias in the complaints of these citizens of rural small towns. Americans have been notoriously opposed to groups or individuals concerned with ideas over actions, quality over quantity, freedom of conduct over pragmatic conformity.<sup>6</sup> However, little was done to officially cope with the volunteer question because the preservationists were of an orientation similar to that of the critics and were not really interested in making the use of volunteers a workable proposition. They chose, rather, to focus on the negative image being projected and to use it to rid the organization of both volunteers and activists whom they grouped together as undesireables.

This sort of internal conflict continued on all sides. It had been implicit in points of view from early in Hudson River Sloop Restoration's history and had become explicit and a matter of policy disagreement by mid-summer 1970. Since, in general, all Hudson River Sloop Restoration members agreed on the organization's fundamental purposes - the crusade for a cleaner environment through the sailing of a beautiful boat - the differences within the organization had to find expression elsewhere. Volunteers were ancillary; sloop festivals were, perhaps, a more central target.

The festivals served as the means by which the organization's activists dramatized their most fundamental concerns: the necessity for the interaction and cooperation of all kinds of people to help solve their common and ultimate

problem - survival. Those festivals which were most successful in bringing together different kinds of people and different ideas were the most irksome to certain members of Hudson River Sloop Restoration. The Poughkeepsie Festival on August 1-2 attracted probably the widest range of people and ideas of any that summer; yet, the same people who wondered why certain volunteers were not gainfully employed somewhere instead of "hanging out" in the Hudson Valley remarked that the festival looked like a "rally for the Black Panther party".



This same group which criticized volunteers and festivals tended to accent problems with the display trailer. Everytime the trailer had to be relocated (twenty-five dollars would be considered inexpensive for the move), emphasis was placed on the bill and its drain on organization money. Little real attempt was ever made to utilize the trailer in an

organized, professional way. Its operation was left solely to volunteers not always prepared for the responsibility. Positive reinforcement from the central office was generally lacking. It seemed as though the trailer's complete failure would have been eagerly accepted by some with an "I told you so" attitude.

The "festival summer" ended with a great deal of disappointment on the part of a great number of people. Many young volunteers, for whom the sloop project represented a kind of "movement", who saw it as a tool for bringing people together and dealing with fundamental social and political problems, went home in September quite dismayed. The disillusionment they felt had only partly to do with the relative success or failure of the individual festivals. More than that, their disappointment grew out of the inconsistency they saw between how the sloop was represented and how it in reality, was operated. For some of these volunteers the farewell to innocence came as a harsh taste of reality. Others, not so young and not so innocent, saw Hudson River Sloop Restoration's failures as a cold, negative reminder about what it meant to get involved at all. Some, who had worked with the organization for what was now four or five years, felt dismay at just what all of their time and energy had come to. A few very angry individuals began thinking about how to regroup and insure a shift in the organization's policy-making base. And finally, there were those indomitable few who kept on believing that a better day would come

when differences would be settled and there would be fair winds for all. Pete Seeger, in his gentle way, expressed this optimism in a letter to Reed Haslam and Harry Dobson on September 25, 1970:

...I think there is still a chance that the Clearwater can fulfill our original dream that she can persuade people of different races, politics, ages and sex and occupation, to temporarily disregard the fact that some of their actions and behavior offend each other, and to work to restore the Hudson.

There's even a certain humor in facing up to the fact that we offend each other. The feeling is mutual. But if people like us the world around can't agree to disagree, the world hasn't<sup>7</sup> got any more of a chance than the Clearwater.

The passing of the festival summer of 1970 signaled the passing of more than just a season in the Clearwater's history. For one thing, it marked the end of what might be called the early days of Hudson River Sloop Restoration. Before, and to a great extent even up into the summer of 1970, Hudson River Sloop Restoration had exhibited all the marks of a young high-energy organization. Any ideas or suggestions were openly listened to and considered. Any volunteer was welcome. Every possibility was explored; all assistance gratefully accepted. Beginning in the summer of 1970 and continuing routinely thereafter such unsolicited help was put on the "in" pile and considered as time and need warranted. While an interested party was likely to receive an extended personal response to communication in 1969, by spring of 1970 his chances depended a great deal on the inclinations and harried schedule of the central office.

But this energetic, open-to-all stance was not the only thing changing. Hudson River Sloop Restoration, as an organization, was beginning to undergo a kind of identity check. Questions on the order of "who are we?" and, "what exactly are we supposed to be doing?" began surfacing. In a sense, Hudson River Sloop Restoration, now without a doubt in the public eye, (Time Magazine had called the Clearwater "the best-known sailing boat in America"), was beginning to become self-conscious. Some would say it was losing its openness, others that it was "cleaning up its act". However the changeover is viewed, it is unquestionable that the combination of resignations and changes in the board of directors brought an end to the "early days" of the Clearwater. After the summer of 1970, Hudson River Sloop Restoration quite simply had fewer tendrils going out in fewer directions. As an organization, it chose rather to concentrate on a program of ecological activism and awareness. The historical aspect of the Clearwater was moved to a secondary position and its social activist posture was virtually obliterated.



- 1 Susan Crane, edited tape transcript, sections 1a and 1b.
- 2 Anonymous, tape transcript 1.
- 3 Sam Sunshine, edited tape transcript, sec. 1.
- 4 Susan Crane, ibid., sec. 2.
- 5 Anonymous, document 1.
- 6 For a good analysis of this concept see Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, New York, 1962.
- 7 Pete Seeger, document 2.



# VIII

"I would suggest that HRSR adopt but a single thrust - clean water for the Hudson River and connecting estuaries... We are in an environmental crisis today. We have lost 10% of our fresh waters to mercury alone. One-third of our estuaries are closed to shell-fishing due to man-created contaminations. Our political and bureaucratic leaders, with a few significant exceptions, are playing games with our waterways. It is up to individual citizens, such as this Board to create an overpowering demand for clean waters."

Dom Pirone, 1971





The new profile which Hudson River Sloop Restoration was to project as it went into the early 1970's was signaled at the end of the summer 1970 season. Hal Cohen, an IBM engineer and resident of Poughkeepsie, had been involved with the sloop organization from the very first lawn party. As organization president he wrote an editorial in the autumn 1970 issue of the North River Navigator, Hudson River Sloop Restoration's official newsletter:

HRSR, through the operation of the Clearwater, has demonstrated a unique ability to draw many thousands of Hudson Valley residents to our waterfront festivals. Last year, our attraction was "Clearwater" herself and the festivals. Residents of apathetic river communities learned that they and their neighbors could create town parties and have a good time working together.

This year we have become more informative. Knowing that people were concerned about their home towns and country, we brought them exhibits which showed the degrees of pollution in the river, named the polluters, indicated the polluting substances such as detergents, sewage, etc., and told the value of a clean river by showing how it was used in the past. We also told people how much it would cost to clean our rivers and how much money was available to governments according to the priorities the people set through their elected representatives.

I believe we are ready to move ahead to the next phase. We must accept that most people are willing to learn the lessons of history and want to do something to improve the quality of their lives. This will require active sloop organizations of local people working in their own towns under the guidance of HRSR. These sloop clubs must represent the entire community. By this, I mean a real mixture of people of different ages, races, beliefs, etc., and not just token representation of any one segment of the population. They will act as a group on problems that may affect different people in the group to different degrees but the common goal will be an improved life in harmony with nature. These projects will range from building waterfront parks to starting sailing programs

to leading the move to ban throw-away cans to re-<sup>1</sup>  
cycling garbage and to the improvement of housing.

The significant statement is, "I believe we are ready to move ahead to the next phase." What follows immediately is more or less the "next phase" as viewed by an "early years" sloop organization member. It involves, basically, the idea of community organization and social activism. As it worked out, however, the "next phase" was characterized by a commitment to education and environmental action instead.

Dom Pirone was one of the scientist members of Hudson River Sloop Restoration. A university educator and well-known environmentalist, he became involved with the sloop project for solely ecological reasons. Speaking about the shift in emphasis which began in autumn of 1970 he characterized it in this way:

The Clearwater's first years were a sort of "Phase 1". We tried to bring people to the river, to show them there's something in the river for them.

Now we're getting into "Phase 2", into direct environmental action and education. This boat is going to be working for the environment, day in and day out. 2

The foundation for the sloop project's educational involvement had been laid long before. Hudson River Sloop Restoration had always viewed itself as an educational organization and had been chartered as such in 1966 by the State of New York. The question was really in what field was Hudson River Sloop Restoration to be educational. Earlier directors, interested in more fundamental social questions, had used the word in a wider sense. The new

group (1971-72) was speaking about environmentally-oriented classroom education.

The North River Navigator noted in its June 15, 1970 issue, that the Clearwater had just completed "a very successful month of educational activities...under the auspices of SCOPE" ( the Suffolk County Organization for the Promotion of Education). It continued:

...throughout May, the sloop was used as a floating classroom on the problems of environmental quality by over 1,000 students, teachers, and civic leaders. This was HRSR's first in-depth educational venture.

By a year later, Hudson River Sloop Restoration was fully committed to the idea of the use of the Clearwater as a floating classroom. The first massive attempt at such a use for the sloop became a reality in spring of 1971. Mildred Katz, a New Rochelle housewife, active PTA member, and citizen ecologist, proposed to the city's school board that New Rochelle retain the Clearwater for a month as the key feature in the school system's environmental education program. After several fund-raisings, a number of different mailings, and a great deal of hard work, the New Rochelle City School District raised the necessary \$8,000 and chartered the Clearwater for the month of April. During that month, the Clearwater was visited by some one-thousand sixth-grade students. It was thought by the school district's administrators that this age group would benefit most from this type of educational experience. A preparatory classroom manual for pre-visit use was put together by a curriculum

committee composed of historians, English and social studies teachers, and biology instructors. Reviewing the project, Steve Brown of New York City's Sunday News wrote:

As part of the special curriculum set up by a committee of teachers, the pupils measured the water's temperature at one and two fathoms (six and twelve feet for landlubbers), took samples of water for analysis, kept logs of the ship activities and gained at least a basic understanding of how sailing ships use the wind for locomotion.

The shipboard experiments were preceded by classroom instruction and will be followed by more classroom time devoted to analyzing the cruise. Topics included the effects of pollution on the environment, history of the Hudson sloop trade, geography of the Hudson River Valley and the Long Island Sound, marine biology, songs and literature of the 19th Century, and the seamen who sailed the cargo sloops.<sup>4</sup>

New Rochelle staff evaluation of the project was quite favorable and might be summarized in the words of Adrienne Bedelle, committee chairman of the project:

...the Clearwater project...was one of the finest experiences that New Rochelle sixth grade children have ever had. A discovery classroom of this type which brings about an awareness of a new area of our planet and a recognition of ecological relationships is priceless.<sup>5</sup>

Richard Olcott, assistant superintendent of New Rochelle schools added:

On the whole, I think it fair to say that the Clearwater project was an unqualified success. It brought a unique and enlarging educational experience to more than one-thousand sixth grade students and produced an excitement and interest in environmental issues in the total community.<sup>6</sup>  
We plan to repeat the program...

The program was repeated, in New Rochelle and elsewhere. As the program developed, the Clearwater was used for educational purposes by an ever-widening group of organizations.



The schedule for 1972 found the sloop in New Rochelle for the month of May, with the Rye Conservation Society in Rye, New York, for two weeks of April, with the Wave Hill Center for Environmental Studies of Riverdale, New York for the other two weeks of April, with PS 3 of New York City in June, New Haven, Connecticut in September, and several New Jersey communities in October.

By this time, the educational program had developed enough to warrant the hiring of an on-board environmental educator. Also, additional equipment such as microscopes, a bottom grab, and a plankton net were added to the water testing, fishing, and seining equipment already on board.



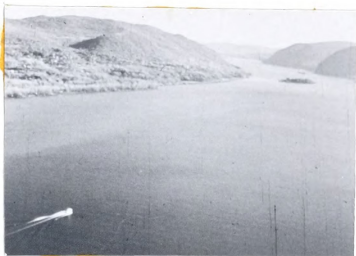
The North River Navigator for August, 1972 carried this review of the season's education program:

We were very happy with our school program this spring. During April-June approximately 3,000 children and 1,200 adults participated in an extensive educational program aboard the Clearwater which included fishing, seining, water testing, plankton and bottom sampling, as well as lectures and discussions about the environment, ecology, water, and the Hudson's history.

In one sense, the development of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's education program was a natural outgrowth of its widening participation in the process of environmental awareness. As with the education program, concern with environmental problems had been implicit in the organization's aims since its beginning. Actually, Hudson River Sloop Restoration's concern with the conservation of the Hudson River grew quite naturally out of its interests in the river's past.

The special loveliness of the Hudson River Valley has been a thing of special note ever since Henry Hudson called it "a very good land to fall in with, and a pleasant land to see" back in 1607. Washington Irving, whose own residence, Sunnyside, sat on the east bank of the river at Tarrytown, spoke for many when he said:

It has been my lot, in the course of a somewhat wandering life, to behold some of the rivers of the old world, most renowned in history and song, yet none have been able to efface or dim the pictures of my native stream thus early stamped upon my memory. My heart would ever revert to them with a filial feeling, and a recurrence of the joyous associations of boyhood;...if ever I should wish for a retreat whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley.



Certain of the world's rivers have inspired the imagination enough to be remembered in literature, music, and art. The majesty of the Hudson has frequently prompted comparison with these other famous rivers. George William Curtis, civil service reformer, and editor of Putnam's Monthly Magazine and Harper's Weekly noted:

...its spacious and stately character, its varied and magnificent outline, from the Palisades to the Catskills, are as epical as the loveliness of the Rhine is lyrical. The Hudson implies a continent behind. For vineyards it has forests. For a belt of water, a majestic stream. For graceful and grain goldened heights, it has imposing mountains... The Danube has, in parts, glimpses of such grandeur. The Elbe has sometimes such delicately pencilled effects. But no European river is so lordly in its bearing, none flows in such state to the sea. <sup>9</sup>

Moreover, the Hudson River provided a special kind of inspiration for early American artists and writers. Using the river valley as a rallying point, these men attempted



to establish an American art and an American literature. The "Hudson River School" of painters and the "Knickerbocker Men of Letters" (as they came to be called), hoped to remove the American artistic tradition from its slavish imitation of European models. Painters such as Asher B. Durand and Thomas Cole roamed the Hudson Valley in search of breathtaking landscapes which they could transfer to canvas. Imitations soon followed and, as was hoped, younger artists began making similar use of American subjects for their work.

Writers, as well, who hoped to establish an American literature, drew inspiration from the Hudson. Authors such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and James Kirke Paulding began writing about local places and people. In a sense, the more creative of these writings became a kind of American folklore which younger authors could imitate and upon which later writers could draw.

Both groups were amazingly successful in what they set out to do and both made extensive use of Hudson Valley material in the process.

The Hudson's importance is not confined, however, to its spiritual qualities. Naturalist Robert Boyle, writing in 1971, had this to say about the river:

To the handful of people who truly know it, the Hudson River is the most productive, abused, beautiful, ignored, and surprising body of water on the face of the Earth. There is no other river quite like the Hudson, and, for many persons, no other river will do. The Hudson is the river.

This attitude may seem affected or extravagant... Compared to the Mississippi, the Rio Grande, and almost 80 other American rivers, the Hudson is a

midget. From its source in the Adirondack Mountains to its mouth at the south tip of Manhattan Island, the Hudson runs for only 315 miles. Yet the river has grandeur, and it is of just such a size and length as to compel strong sentiments. You feel as though you can come to grips with the Hudson....

...Geologically, the Hudson flows through five physiographic provinces - the Canadian Shield, the Folded Appalachians, the Hudson Highlands, the New England Upland, and the New Jersey Lowland - and past a sixth, the Catskills. According to geologist Christopher J. Schuberth of the American Museum of Natural History, few rivers in North America traverse "such geological diversity and complexity in such a short length."

Botanically, the Hudson Valley has great variety. The natural climax vegetation is what plant ecologists call oak-chestnut-hickory forest... In point of fact, there probably are more species of trees in the Hudson watershed than in the British Isles... The variety of vegetation may be explained in part by the diversity of...changing landscapes. Then again, the river water itself has a moderating influence on air temperatures. In many ways, the Hudson serves as a long, finger-like chute of the south, up which warm air can travel northward. Southern plants normally found in the Carolinas or Virginia, such as prickly pear, grow in parts of the valley. Moreover, the varying combinations of vegetation, temperature, and topography makes the Hudson Valley an interesting transition or "tension" zone for birds and animals coming from both north and south.

Above all, there is the Hudson River itself and the unseen life beneath its surface. The Hudson nowadays is really not a single, continuous river but a half-dozen or so different bodies of water stitched together...a mountain trout stream, a bass and pike river, a canal,...an estuary, and a seaport. South of the Narrows at the entrance to New York harbor is the sunken channel of an older Hudson. In glacial times, the continental shelf was above sea level, and the Hudson then flowed another 120 miles out to sea.... As of now, the biological productivity of the lower Hudson is staggering. Fishes are there by the millions, with marine and freshwater species often side by side in the same patch of water. All told, the populations of fishes utilizing the lower Hudson for spawning, nursery, or feeding grounds comprise the greatest single wildlife resource in New York State...Besides striped bass and sea

sturgeon, the river is aswarm year-round...with white perch, bluefish, shad, herring, large-mouth bass, carp needlefish, yellow perch, menhaden, golden shiners, darters, carp, tomcod, and sunfish ...blue crabs, grass shrimps, sand shrimps, and... other invertibrates.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, the US Army Corps of Engineers has termed the lower Hudson "probably the most complex major estuary in the United States."

Besides its attraction for artists, writers, and naturalists, the Hudson held a special importance for the leaders of the fight for a better environment in general. Audubon, the bi-monthly official publication of the society of the same name, chose to dedicate its 434th issue to the Hudson. The Audubon Society had been founded in the nineteenth century. Though it was principally concerned with the study and protection of birds, it has a long reputation as a leader in the fight for the conservation of our natural order in total. Les Line, the editor, wrote in the special issue on the Hudson:

...this issue of Audubon is unique in our 73 years of publishing history. For it is dedicated to a single subject - the Hudson River...

We chose the Hudson River as the subject for an entire issue not because of Eastern parochialism, but because the story of the Hudson is classic. It is a magnificent river, an historic river, and a terribly abused river. What has happened to the Hudson has happened to every major river in America (and most smaller streams). Only the names need be changed. <sup>11</sup>

The Hudson then, already had played several important roles in the development of the "American experience". For its use as a significant environmental rallying point only one further element was necessary - widespread public interest in ecology.

What we might call the "popularization of the ecology movement" can be reasonably dated to the very successful "Earth Day" celebrations in April of 1969, and to Richard Nixon's "all out war on pollution" speech on New Year's Day, 1970. Almost overnight "ecology" became a household word. Widespread lay interest and action became evident on every side, though, unfortunately, much of this effort was often diluted by a good deal of rhetoric in high places. The Clearwater, preceding all of this flag-waving by several years, was a very tangible symbol and was immediately useful to different interest groups involved in the fight for a better environment. So it was that CBS news covering national Earth Day activities on April 22, 1970, chose to focus upon, among other things, the Clearwater's arrival in Washington D.C. and its crew's presentation, in congress, of the State of the Hudson report. The Washington Post described the report as a "striking multi-media dramatization of the pollution problems of the Hudson River - and, by analogy, of many of the nation's waterways." It went on:

Slide after slide and song after song brought vividly to life the contrast between the Hudson River of 1850 and the Hudson of today. At one moment, fresh water sparkled over rocks or lapped against a green and sunlit shore; at the next, stiff congeries of dead fish lay beached in ponds of scum; orange oceans of filth belched from factory conduits; dried streambeds crusted in industrial heat.<sup>12</sup>

As the battle for the environment took form there was a good deal of possibility for the Clearwater's involvement. Its unique ability to symbolize an era when human beings



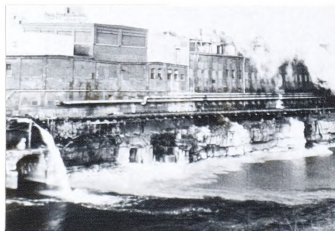
lived in better harmony with their environment made it a prominent tool for ecologists both here and abroad.

The organization's own involvement with an ecology program moved slowly at first. But from late 1970 through early 1971, as the education program gradually fell into place, it became evident that its central focus was to be on environmental awareness.

By summer of 1971 Hudson River Sloop Restoration was looking for an ecologist-executive director. This it found in Dom Pirone. Pirone was born and raised in New York and had what he called a sense of "patria" for the area. An intelligent and outspoken professor of biology and environmental science, he focused much of his energy on problems of water and had been involved in Hudson River conservation for years. He was a well-known figure at hearings on problems of water pollution, and was actively involved in the Hudson River Fishermen's Association. The Fishermen's Association had been achieving national notoriety for its prosecution of Hudson River polluters. Basic to its system of halting polluters was the 1899 Federal Refuse Act. The exact wording of the bill is as follows:

It shall not be lawful to throw, discharge, or deposit, or cause, suffer, or procure to be thrown, discharged, or deposited either from or out of any ship, barge, or other floating craft of any kind, or from the shore, wharf, manufacturing establishment, or mill of any kind, any refuse matter of any kind of description whatever other than that flowing from streets and sewers and passing therefrom in a liquid state, into any navigable water of the United States, or into any tributary of any navigable water from which the same float or be washed into such navigable water; and it shall not be

lawful to deposit, or cause, suffer, or procure to be deposited material of any kind in any place on the bank of any navigable water, or on the bank of any tributary of any navigable water where the same shall be liable to be washed into such navigable water, either by ordinary or high tides, or by storms or floods, or otherwise, whereby navigation shall or may be impeded or obstructed. Every person and every corporation that shall violate, or that shall knowingly aid, abet, authorize, or instigate a violation of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$2,500 nor less than \$500, or by imprisonment (in the case of a natural person) for not less than thirty days nor more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court, one-half of said fine to be paid to the person or persons giving information which shall lead to conviction.<sup>13</sup>



James Miller, commenting on this act notes:

Not only did this law require every factory releasing material into any navigable stream in the United States to get a dumping license from the Corps of Engineers; it made unlicensed dumping a federal crime punishable by a \$500 to \$2500-a-day fine. Moreover, it stipulated that any citizen

who helped the Corps of Engineers get a polluter convicted could keep half the fine for himself. <sup>14</sup>

The Fishermen proved to be unrelenting in their prosecution of polluters. Pipe by pipe, they proceeded up and down the river, gathering data on individual polluters of the Hudson. The information would then be passed on to Federal attorney Whitney North Seymour whose responsibility it was to initiate legal proceedings. Pirone, a key figure in the Hudson Valley Fishermen's Association, was offered and accepted the position of executive director of Hudson River Sloop Restoration. From that point in time, the Clearwater's position as an ecological watchdog was firmly established.

Pirone's view of Hudson River Sloop Restoration was well defined:

The Hudson River sloops were workboats. The sloop, CLEARWATER, has a particular job to do. That job is to help restore and preserve a living, healthy Hudson River and to get people to use it non-destructively. If this can be accomplished, by example, it will be of great benefit in retrieving and maintaining quality natural environments all over the globe...

It must be clearly recognized that the goal set forth here is a clean viable, and utilizable Hudson River, not the glorification of a class of boats long since historical. The CLEARWATER will achieve fame as the vehicle which got the Hudson Valley really moving into a rational human future, which, by definition, means respect and protection for the natural river ecosystem....

The questions are: Can the rational use of a living system that the sloop embodies, be the rule of the river again? Can she help determine the priorities which will be imposed upon our valley in the future? Will we learn to use our resources in a constantly renewable manner, as a wind-driven vessel does, or will we court disaster by grabbing at momentary expedients to the rapidly

approaching point of no return?

The sloop, CLEARWATER, should serve as a constant unremitting conscience for human society in the Hudson Valley. She must not in any way be purposely abrading to this society; CLEARWATER must be leading our society by bringing together, in one massive effort, those out-front individuals who are and will be leading us all towards a returned total glory for the Hudson River.<sup>15</sup>

To back up a policy of vigorous demand for clean waters he suggested:

What I hope to do is to get started this year and finance on a three year basis a real good five to six hour environmental program complete with ten or twelve thousand dollars worth of environmental monitoring equipment so that we can hold our heads high, come into any community, take out any level of adults, children, college students, or anybody, and give them five or six hours on the Hudson or on Long Island Sound of really worthwhile environmental education that could not be duplicated elsewhere.<sup>16</sup>

In December of 1971 this developing ecological dimension became a matter of official policy. A special meeting of Hudson River Sloop Restoration corporate members was held on December 12 and the following ammendment was passed by a vote of twenty-five to one defining the organization's aims anew: (new matter underlined)

Article 2(a): "To acquaint people with matters relating to our cultural heritage and the conditions of our waterways; and to maintain and promote interest in the history, ecology and condition of the Hudson River and its tributaries and connecting waterways both as a commercial and pleasure artery; and in connection therewith to build, own, operate and exhibit replicas of the great sloops which once freely navigated the river, thereby generating a greater interest in our cultural heritage and an understanding of the contributions made to our culture and commerce by the river and the sloops which sailed it; and to investigate and to conduct research concerning the ecology and present condition of such waterways and the source of

contaminents of such waterways and appropriate means to dispense with or avoid such contaminants and to afford appropriate publicity to the results of such investigations, and to promote the improvement of the present condition of such waterways.<sup>17</sup>

The sloop organization quickly took up the new challenge. Conditions within Hudson River Sloop Restoration changed to mirror this new role of environmental activist. The new board of directors reflected these changes. Pirone noted:

Look at our board of directors. Beginning with John M. Burns, our president, they're practically all real environmentalists - not people looking for a hobby or a good time.<sup>18</sup>

Early enactments by the new sloop board involved getting an on-board teacher for the sailing season and putting together the Hudson River Sloop Teaching Manual which had sections on Hudson River sloops, Hudson Valley ecology, organization history, a glossary of sailing terms and test questions. More significant, however, was the beginning of polluter monitoring under the 1899 Refuse Act.

John M. Burns, a former executive assistant to Whitney North Seymour, Jr., the Nixon administration's US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, had been elected president of Hudson River Sloop Restoration in November of 1971. Burns lost his position as assistant executive prosecutor during a series of encounters with the General Motors Corporation at the end of 1970. It had been alleged that he was "over-enthusiastic" in his prosecution of polluters.<sup>19</sup> The case won Burns an incredible amount of publicity, which, although it cost him his position, made him into an instant

hero with ecologist groups. After being elected president of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, he moved forward quickly in the publication of information which indicated exactly who contaminated the Hudson and how much they were contributing to the total problem. In one of his first statements after taking office, Burns presented formal charges against several New Jersey firms in December of 1971. Speaking at a public meeting in Englewood, New Jersey, he concluded:

This report is part of a continuing program by Hudson River Sloop Restoration, Inc., to investigate every geographical area impinging on the Hudson and to disclose to the citizens just who the major polluters are in their areas.<sup>20</sup>

This report was actually a predecessor of the soon-to-be-published Polluter Reports. On Monday morning, March 6, 1972 a press release was issued from the sloop office in Cold Spring:

Hudson River Sloop Restoration, Inc. has announced today a new water quality monitoring program for the Hudson River Basin and area coastal waters. The monitoring program called Clearwater Polluter Reports will document county by county the industrial wastes being dumped into the Hudson River and Long Island Sound.<sup>21</sup>

Thus began the statement announcing a set of reports which would systematically document pollution of the Hudson River. Information for the reports came, ironically, right from the polluters themselves. A federal regulation implemented by the Nixon administration in July of 1971 required all industrial plants in the United States to file applications for waste disposal permits with the US Army Corps of Engineers. After collecting the information from

these permits, the Environmental Protection Agency would issue industry by industry guidelines on what discharge levels were acceptable and what were not.



It should be noted that this new regulation was highly criticized by environmentalists. For one thing, it granted several years of immunity to polluters awaiting the processing of their applications. Furthermore, it was felt that processed permits would allow industries to legally pollute waterways, thereby rendering ineffective the 1899 Refuse Disposal Act. On the other hand, these applications did indicate the quantity of liquid waste discharged and the concentration and absolute weight of waste substances contained in the liquids. Also, the process by which the pollutants were produced, abatement procedures before discharge, and the history of such discharges all had to be specifically

described. John Burns completed negotiations with the local district office of the US Army Corps of Engineers to copy the approximately nine hundred such applications filed by plants affecting waterways in which the Clearwater sailed. The March 6th news release went on to say:

The 900 applications will be the basis, in the coming months, for Clearwater Polluter Reports for each county along the Hudson and the coast. The Restoration has made arrangements with qualified local scientists, including members of various university chemical engineering faculties to review these applications and to propose abatement practices to achieve the highest technological standards possible for abating specific wastes. The information in the reports will be further monitored for accuracy by teams of local Restoration memberships conducting on-site water quality testing.

The proposals of scientists advising the Restoration will be made available to state, federal, and local pollution abatement enforcement officials as well as the offending plant...

Clearwater Polluter Reports will be made available to other interested organizations in the Hudson River Valley.<sup>22</sup>

The Polluter Reports proved in the following months to be very powerful documents. The North River Navigator for October 1972 noted that the presentation of the Albany Polluter Report to an official from the State Department of Environmental Conservation was one of the "highlights" of the summer season. The various letters, recommendations, and public pressure prompted by the reports probably accounts for the most significant legal progress made in the Clearwater's five year fight to clean up the Hudson. Speaking at the annual meeting of Hudson River Sloop Restoration on December 3, 1972, Burns noted that the Polluter Reports were tremendously successful, that suggestions based on the reports had been



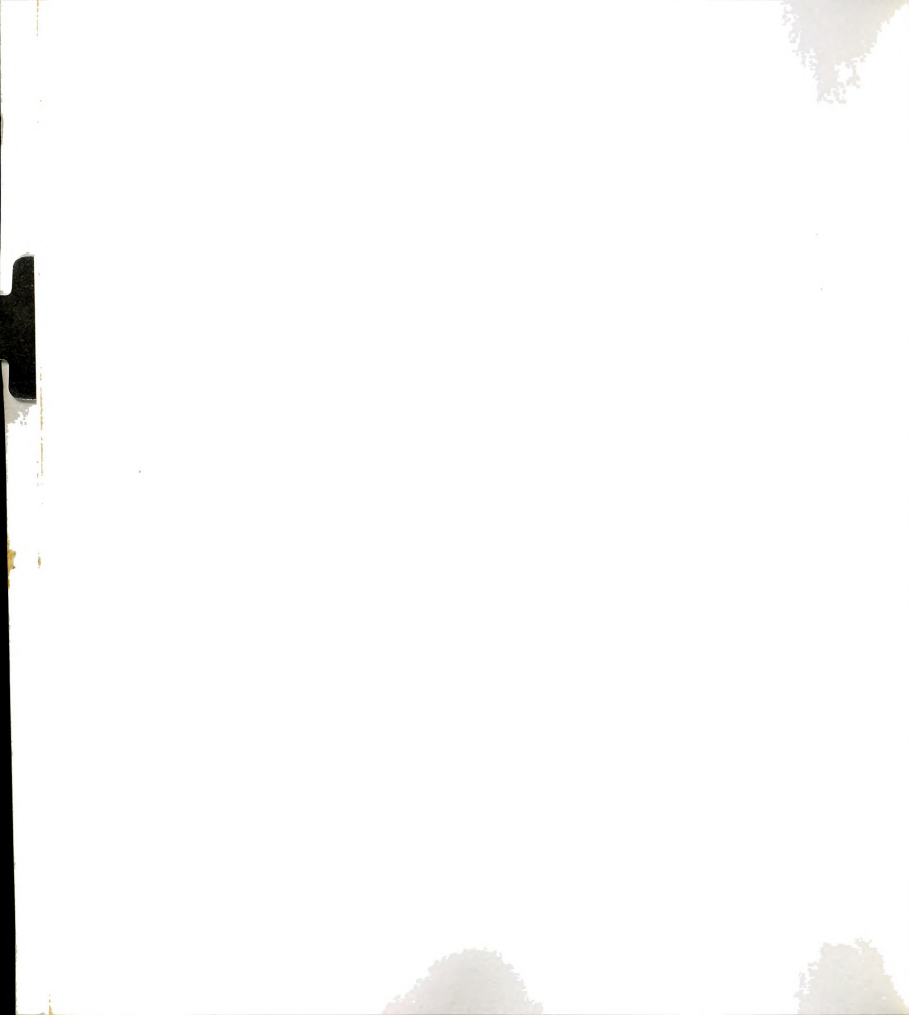
made by scientists to a number of firms involved, that abatement procedures had begun at several sites, and that the US Attorney had delivered his first indictment in the area and "would cooperate further with pollution fighting groups if given cooperative assistance."<sup>23</sup>



- 1 Hal Cohen, North River Navigator, Autumn 1970, p.2.
- 2 "Clearwater Sets Ecology Course", in Herald Statesman,  
Yonkers, New York, February 17, 1972, document 3.
- 3 North River Navigator, June 15, 1970.
- 4 "Happy Kids At Sea", Sunday News, New York, NY, April 25,  
1971, p.w1, document 4.
- 5 Adrienne Bedelle, document 5.
- 6 Richard Olcott, document 6.
- 7 North River Navigator, August 1972, p.1
- 8 Washington Irving, op. cit., p.76.
- 9 George W. Curtis, op. cit., p.76.
- 10 Robert Boyle, "The Hudson River Lives", in Audubon, ob.  
cit., pp. 16-17.
- 11 Les Line, in Audubon, op. cit., p.2.
- 12 North River Navigator, June 15, 1970, p.1.
- 13 1899 Refuse Act, quoted in Audubon, op. cit., p.48.
- 14 James Miller, "The Law That Could Clean Up Our Rivers",  
in Reader's Digest, v. 98, no. 589, May 1971, doc. 7.
- 15 Dom Pirone, "Suggested Duties and Programs of the  
Executive Director of the Hudson River Sloop Res-  
toration, Inc., document 8.
- 16 Dom Pirone, edited tape transcript, no. 3.
- 17 By-Laws of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, Inc., Art-  
icle 2.
- 18 Dom Pirone, quoted in Herald Statesman, op. cit.
- 19 "The Burns Case" was in the media for some time in early  
1971. "The Burns Case" article in Time, January 25,  
1973, p. 43, gives as good a summary of the affair  
as is useful for present purposes.



- 20 John Burns, Hudson River Sloop Restoration "News Release", December 15, 1971.
- 21 Hudson River Sloop Restoration "News Release", March 6, 1972.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Hudson River Sloop Restoration board of directors meeting - minutes, December 3, 1972.





## IX

"Man thrives best in challenge. The challenge can assume many forms. Man has the capability of zeroing in on challenge...and where man avoids challenge, he weakens himself..."

We have a tendency to condemn... We have a tendency to look at man and the acts of man which can be immoral, wretched, at times demeaning...but condemnation serves no purpose.

Man has unlimited capability. He has the capability, given time, of accomplishing anything within the reach of his imagination...We need to develop means of communication to transmit those ideas."

Henry Pahl, 1972





With the development of the educational and ecological dimensions of its program, the sloop organization's emphasis on social and community functions underwent a simultaneous phasing-out. A booklet defining the organization's aims for the 1972 sailing season began:

Since her launching in 1969 the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater has been involved in a wide variety of activities directed at stimulating interest in the environmental crisis facing the Hudson River Valley, the nation, and the world. This year Clearwater embarks on a new direction in her operation. During the spring and fall she has been and will be used by local school districts as part of their program to bring to their students and faculty the ecological and historical background of the Hudson River Valley.<sup>1</sup>

Dom Pirone, director of Hudson River Sloop Restoration during the winter of 1972, when questioned about the waterfront festivals which had played such a significant role in the Clearwater's early years commented:

We haven't abandoned them. We hope to have four of them this summer. It's just that the emphasis this summer will not be on singing and having a good time.<sup>2</sup>

The schedule for summer of 1972 indicated more of this type of thinking. Of the forty-five entries listed showing programs of different types, only five were announcements of festivals. There was no doubt about the fact that music and community actions for their own sake played a small part in the 71-72 list of priorities. In part, this was due to Pete Seeger's resignation as chairman of the board of directors in fall of 1970. Without question his interest in music and community affairs was a source of

inspiration to those Hudson River Sloop Restoration members actively interested in either area. Also, the winding down of those aspects of the Clearwater's program was definitely part of a movement to "clean up" the organization's image. There were those members who felt that the communal aspect of the sloop organization was alienating exactly that segment of the Hudson Valley community whose support was necessary if the Hudson were to be cleaned up at all. Thus, Dom Pirone, talking about his interests as Hudson River Sloop Restoration director commented:

The people who can make some difference do not feel welcome aboard the Clearwater. The real fishermen of the river, the guys who work for industry or work for a utility and spend their free time fishing on the river - to them the Clearwater is a big joke; it was those hippies sailing around screwing, shooting up, etc....-some of which is true, most of which is not true...I'm going to make the average blue collar working man feel that the Clearwater is his. I'm going to have him aboard, I'm going to the sportsman's clubs up and down the valley telling them that we want their men aboard the Clearwater to show the kids how to fish. The upper middle class, which is probably the most influential class of society outside of the extremely powerful which we can't reach - people like doctors and lawyers and influential, conscientious businessmen in each community - these men don't feel welcome aboard the Clearwater; these are the people I am going to make feel welcome aboard the Clearwater.

At other junctures there was criticism of those individuals whose orientation was considered to be with the festival-music-communal group. "Hippie-types" were more vulnerable to criticism, and so provided a good excuse for a general coup. Some of the criticism aimed at this group was explicit. One long-time Hudson River Sloop Restoration

supporter stated:

I've been so raw as to say it's a floating hippie pad at times which may be quite unfair, but which has been borne out at times unfortunately - the loose way it has been run at times, the lack of receptiveness on the part of crew to people who have been coming aboard in a way that is hospitable and friendly. Maybe the people at that time didn't mean to be unfriendly or inhospitable, but still and all there is a public to be accomodated.<sup>4</sup>

Sam Sunshine, discussing Cold Spring attitudes toward the sloop workers noted:

And then when they got caught too taking a bath in a drinking fountain over in Mear Mountain and their names were brought in the newspaper and everything else, then everybody said, "See, I told you so! They're a bunch of goddam hippies."<sup>5</sup>

Some criticism was more subtle. One sloop organization member suggested:

Someone is going to say, "Oh, he's anti-hippie, he's anti-long hair." I'm not; I'm not anti-long hair at all. But, I do get upset when I see somebody running around with hair wild out like a bush and not trying to do anything about it. You know, I like long hair on people - I don't for myself - but I like it on a lot of people if they take care of it. I don't like to see it grow wild.

The same thing with clothing - if I see a guy running around with a loose pair of shorts on and no underwear on, I don't like it because the public doesn't like it. They see it; they know what it is. It insults them. Maybe they shouldn't get uptight, but it does get them uptight.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever the causes, the results were an attempt to weed the "hippie-types" out of the organization and to de-emphasize those of the Clearwater's activities which were community-action oriented.

In one sense, what Hudson River Sloop Restoration was doing was aligning itself with at least the techniques of the

political and economic power structure. It was becoming an "overground" organization. Ironically, at the same time it was doing this, its expressed purpose was to become a more aggressive watchdog over these same political and economic power complexes. Moving radical types out of the organization, or at least de-emphasizing their presence, and accepting Pete Seeger's willing move to a more "invisible" position, was allowing Hudson River Sloop Restoration to enter halls previously barring entrance.

There is a good deal of evidence to bear out this line of thinking. For one thing, it was becoming easier to deal with "establishment" organizations such as state and county parks departments. Where formerly it had been difficult to get permission to dock, agencies were now sending in work crews to help out on festival sites. Also, while Hudson River Sloop Restoration had received a number of grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, it received in June of 1972, its first allotment from the department of Health-Education-Welfare. This highly prestigious grant is awarded to perhaps ten percent of its applicants.

Ideas began to surface which were quite out of character with the early, activist sloop projects. In a news brief dated June 1972, the following suggestion was made in passing:

Talking about money - Clearwater is asking corporations and businesses in the Hudson Valley to contribute to the summer program. How about sending in names of Big Business presidents or Community Relations Directors so that we can ask them to join in sponsoring the Clearwater this summer??

Such a suggestion would have sounded strange, perhaps, when back in August of 1969, Allan Aunapu, first captain of the Clearwater, had raised the red, black, and green "Black Liberation" flag up the Clearwater's mast at Kingston, New York.

There is, possibly, another line of thinking on this changeover of political tactics. Hudson River Sloop Restoration, like many other activist groups, was reflecting contemporary patterns in the society at large. During this same period of time activists were cutting their hair, deemphasizing radical political displays, and seeking out established ways of setting their issues before the legislature and the judiciary. The common description of the "back to the 50's" phenomenon was "working within the system", but the practical result of all the rhetoric was a pervasive attitude of "benign neglect" toward all pressing social, political, and economic issues.

Whatever the reason or reasons, there is evidence that this type of attitude was a developing trend in Hudson River Sloop Restoration's history. Further information points to the same conclusion. At the board of directors' meeting in December of 1972, Helene Duffy, Hudson River Sloop Restoration operations manager, reported that she had met with representatives of the R.H. Macy department store chain. The purpose as reported in the minutes of the meeting was:

...to discuss the possibility of Macy's sponsoring the Clearwater for a period of time this summer. Selected items from Macy's sports department would be tagged "Clearwater" and a percentage of profits from sale of those articles would be given

to H.R.S.R. Macy's would also make membership forms available and would provide media coverage(TV, radio, newspapers). The format would be in the same vein as Datsun's "Plant-a-Tree" and Mott-Duffy's buying a plot of land in a bird sanctuary.<sup>8</sup>

Other indicators also underline this same trend. At the January 1973 meeting of the board of directors Helene Duffy noted that she "had been one of fourteen people from the whole country" invited to attend a meeting sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to be held in Washington, D.C.

More significantly the North River Navigator for February of 1973 notes:

On December 19, 1972, US District Judge Charles L. Breant, Jr. of the Southern District of New York, ruled that for convictions of violations regarding the Selective Service Act and related laws, service on the Clearwater would be in compliance with requirements for alternate public service beneficial to the country.<sup>9</sup>

This would certainly suggest that the image being projected by Hudson River Sloop Restoration in 1973 was, for better or for worse, a good deal different from that it projected on June 13, 1970 when Cold Spring vigilantes were going to take the law into their own hands and force the "commie-pinkos" out of town.

- 1 "Clearwater Sets Sail Into Your Community", Hudson River Sloop Restoration publication, p. 1, document 9.
- 2 Herald Statesman, op. cit.
- 3 Dom Pirone, edited tape transcript no. 2.
- 4 Alexander Saunders, edited tape transcript no.3.
- 5 Sam Sunshine, edited tape transcript no.2.
- 6 Reed Haslam, edited tape transcript no.1.
- 7 Hudson River Sloop Restoration news brief, June 1972, document no.10.
- 8 Hudson River Sloop Restoration board of directors meeting minutes, December 17, 1972, p.1.
- 9 North River Navigator, February 1973, p.2.





X

"There are several different ways you can get together. One way to get together is for someone to say, 'Alright everybody, let's shut up and listen to what our leader has to say!' Another way you can get together is to say, 'Alright, let's give everyone a chance to be heard.' It's going to take more time, but we want to make sure everyone has a chance to be heard. Curiously enough, this old democratic idea has been all-too-much forgotten in modern America....

Every great historical change has managed to bring together people from different places. The change just hasn't been carried through by one narrow sector of the population. It might be led by one sector of the population, it might be led by a religious group, or a political group, or even an age group, or population group, but the greatest historical changes took place, I think, when you find people coming from different directions to the same conclusion. This is what is happening now in the world; you see people of quite different backgrounds coming to rather similar conclusions."

Pete Seeger, 1972



If one were to profile Hudson River Sloop Restoration as the Clearwater approaches its fifth birthday, the picture would be a fairly good composite of most of its history. Its agenda includes everything from concert series to court suits.

Perhaps the most significant involvements of Hudson River Sloop Restoration at the present time are in the areas of environmental awareness and ecological action.

Pete Seeger, in September of 1970, reporting on the state of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, had signaled a change in organizational interest:

...increasingly we are being asked, "What are you accomplishing? Is the river any cleaner than last year?" Our usual answer is: "Well, we're stirring up a lot of publicity." But this is wearing thin...My guess is that we're going to have to involve masses of people in some activities...in order to point to some achievements which we can see, touch, and maybe swim in.<sup>1</sup>

While school programs aimed at environmental education were developed beginning in 1971, programs aimed at the general public were a bit slower in coming. In January of 1973, the sloop's board of directors approved the hiring of a full time, on-board environmental educator whose job it is to demonstrate methods of water sampling and explain the over-all problems involved in water pollution.

Beginning in the summer of 1973, a series of "Hudson Reawakening Workshops" were begun. These one-day seminars on the Hudson bring together historians, scientists, and legal experts who give intensive surveys of the river's multiple problems, wonders, past, and present.

The sloop organization has been especially active in the area of direct ecological action. The North River Navigator for March, 1973 carried notices of movement in several areas underlining the Clearwater's role as Hudson Valley environmental watchdog. The two main fronts in the battle at present are in the areas of atomic energy plant construction, and the establishment of industrial effluent standards for the nation as a whole.

The Consolidated Edison Company of New York has been operating a nuclear powered generating plant at Indian Point on the Hudson River since the early 1960's. At present hearings are being conducted to determine whether Consolidated Edison will be allowed to operate "Indian Point #2". Although it was licensed to do so two years ago, temporary injunctions were issued as a result of an Atomic Energy Commission survey. The survey, prompted by a Hudson River Fishermen's Association protest, indicated that the plant, if operated as licensed, would kill thirty to fifty percent of the striped bass hatch. This, in turn, would seriously affect the striped bass population of a large segment of the east coast. Tagged Hudson stripers have been caught as far away as the Merrimack River in Massachusetts. Since striped bass fishermen spend more than forty-five million dollars per year on the sport, this ecological loss would have a good deal of effect on the economic situation of coastal settlements throughout the northeast.

There is some serious precedent for the charges as

stated. Beginning in 1963, it was discovered, Consolidated Edison's Indian Point plant had been killing fish at a phenomenal rate. According to Robert Boyle, a marine biologist of some note, the fish, attracted by the discharge of the warm water heated in the process of cooling the condenser, would swim in under a pier which was partially closed and would then be trapped. Some would swim into intake pipes, others died from crowding, disease, lack of food, and, of course, from the heat itself. A basket elevator was used to remove the dead and dying fish. Fishermen discovered the kill when great numbers of crows began converging on the company's dump. A long coverup process began in which Consolidated Edison used fences and guards to keep away investigators and the State Conservation Department quietly assisted by collecting all photographs of the dump and locking them away. The complicity of the State Conservation Department was obvious. Fishermen are usually fined \$27.50 per fish caught out of season, yet no suit was brought against Consolidated Edison. A congressional hearing on problems of the Hudson in 1965 did little to end the fish kill. Instead State Conservation Department officers checked their own worker's home phonebills to see who might have leaked information to conservationists.<sup>2</sup>

By 1969 the fishkills became so serious that the plant had to shut down; fish were literally choking it. Estimates of dead fish run into the millions. Thermal pollution was again the cause of the kill, though Consolidated Edison



pleaded ignorance in the matter. Several people photographed the slaughter. One, Don Benedetto, noted:

The three of us penetrated in about 30 to 40 feet. Guy and Mike got out and walked on the cross-beams shooting a discharge pipe vomiting thousands upon thousands of fingerling striped bass and white perch along with catfish, tomcod, yellow perch, and an occasional sturgeon. We couldn't believe our eyes! In the background I saw a jet of steam and paddled on to investigate. From what looked like a huge pipe suspended above the water line came boiling water so hot that it seemed to condense into steam before hitting the cooler water below. At this point, Guy and I were discovered by Con Ed personnel and ordered to leave at once. We departed as ordered, leaving our photographer undiscovered and still shooting. Twenty minutes later we zoomed in and picked up Mike under the eyes of ten Con Ed employees who did not utter one word...This was one day in my life when I honestly could say I was ashamed of being an American.<sup>3</sup>

At Storm King Mountain, fifteen miles farther north, another controversy involving a Consolidated Edison pumped-storage plant, is presently being argued. The plant proposed for that site (it would be the largest of its kind in the world) is designed to meet peak-period needs. During each cycle the plant would pump six billion gallons of water up a two-mile long, forty foot in diameter tunnel. It would be stored in a reservoir until there was a demand for electricity, at which time the water would flow back down the tunnel, spinning turbines, and generating 2,000,000 kilowatts of electricity in the process.

In the past, controversy generally focused on the damage to the natural beauty of Storm King Mountain and the Hudson Highlands. It took into account as well the unsightliness of new giant-sized high-tension towers which would be

strung across Westchester and Putnam counties. Presently, conservationists oppose both the visual ugliness of the project (which Consolidated Edison has countered by offering to build the plant inside the mountain), and the consequent air pollution which would be generated by its operation. Furthermore, taking the larger view into account, the project as a whole is wasteful since the plant would yield only two kilowatts of electricity for every three used to pump the water up to the reservoir. Although Consolidated Edison was granted a license for the plant in 1965, a Federal Circuit Court of Appeals withdrew the license. New Federal Power Commission hearings ensued with Consolidated Edison being granted a new license. At present the case is being argued before the New York State Court of Appeals by John Burns. Speaking on January 11, 1973, Burns noted that:

Thirty million dead fish dumped back into the Hudson after being mauled in turbines constituted inordinate amounts of "deleterious matter" and thus violates one of the stream standards established by the State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Moreover, the City of New York has consistently opposed the project on the basis that the plant would both increase air pollution in the New York metropolitan area, and furthermore, endanger the forty percent of its water supply which is generated in the Storm King vicinity. The case is important enough to have prompted even Henry Diamond, the State Commissioner who first ruled in favor of Consolidated Edison, to say that he did not want to see conservationists lose their battle, "because it is the symbol of the first

legal victory for the environment, a landmark decision saying you have to look at the environmental impact of a project.<sup>5</sup>



The other significant environmental battle currently being waged in the Hudson Valley centers around the subject of industrial discharge standards. It is useful to review some information here. The 1899 Refuse Act, passed during the McKinley administration, contained two main ideas: the first expressly prohibited industrial waste discharge into any of the nation's waterways; the second encouraged citizen participation in the legal process by granting one-half of the fine which the courts ultimately recieved from polluters to the person who had first reported or identified these law-breakers. In 1972, Congress passed a new bill requiring all industry to submit applications to the Army Corps of Engineers for permits to discharge any waste commodities into waterways.





After studying these applications, the federal government is supposed to issue guidelines on tolerable pollutant levels. Enforcement of the still-to-be-determined levels will not commence until 1983 whereas the 1899 Refuse Act required that the best available controls be installed immediately. Meanwhile, United States attorneys are prohibited from commencing any new proceedings against polluters under the 1899 Refuse Act. For all practical purposes, this leaves polluters free to do as they will until such time as new standards for effluents can be determined and implemented. Considering that over five-hundred suits were brought to court between 1970 and 1972, this act represents a significant reduction in what can currently be done to halt pollution of the nation's waterways.

On January 23, 1973, Hudson River Sloop Restoration issued a formal communication to William Ruckelshaus of the US Environmental Protection Agency protesting proposed issuance of discharge permits under present guidelines stating that "permits issued under hastily-drawn, possibly lax effluent standards could protect a hazardous discharge from prosecution for up to five years."<sup>6</sup>

That Hudson River Sloop Restoration's efforts on behalf of environmental quality are having some impact is evident. On March 27, 1973, the organization issued an appeal to the Hudson Valley scientific community for professional assistance in helping the Environmental Protection Agency develop national standards for industrial waste discharge. Hudson

River Sloop Restoration was one of the only public interest groups invited by the Environmental Protection Agency to advise in this area. It is also the only such group presently attending Environmental Protection Agency hearings on ocean dumping.

Other kinds of projects round out Hudson River Sloop Restoration's current agenda. One of the conspicuous qualities of the sloop group has been its ability to absorb many different kinds of ideas. Its present program includes not only projects which are tightly organized in design, such as the educational and ecological ones already mentioned; but also community-oriented programs which are somewhat more open in structure. To some extent this represents a kind of blending of a variety of the different directions present from the beginning of the sloop project. In one sense, the organization has matured, allowing for a more easy expression of sometimes conflicting ideas.

The other side of the "working within the system" educational and ecological programs are those which deal with the community at large, or what is sometimes called "total environment". Basically, these programs are outgrowths of the festival activities of the sloop's early years.

One of the present-day sloop organization's chief moves in the direction of community projects has been the establishment of the post of community coordinator. A brief statement explaining the position was drawn up by the board of directors on January 28, 1973. The description started:

The role of Community Coordinator is most important in that he (she) will have aroused local interest in HRSR and the work it is doing, and that when Clearwater sails on around the bend there will be an active and aware Sloop Group to wave goodbye. Any three days in a town would include, in the evening, press conferences, films, fishfries, and Sloop Group organization programs; and during the day, visits to local polluters, educational sails and brochure distribution. If a fourth day is scheduled, there will be a community picnic.<sup>7</sup>

This position is not altogether different from the ones held by Jimmy Collier and Lesta Morningstar in 1970 when money from the New York State Council on the Arts was used to underwrite salaries for sloop "advance men". Basically, the position is an activist one calling for someone to work with community groups to arouse local support for the Clearwater and its programs. The return to such a concept in 1973 represents a broadening of the educational and environmental programs which were begun in 1971 and a kind of re-introduction of some of the vitality of early Hudson River Sloop Restoration activities.

In addition to the creation or re-creation of the community coordinator post, there have been other returns to early Hudson River Sloop Restoration projects. Probably the most significant of these is the rebirth of the idea of fundraising concerts. Early in the spring of 1973 it was decided to sponsor a series of twenty concerts on the Long Island Sound as a means of raising money for the organization at large. The idea was to partially repeat the maiden voyage-type program where a "singing crew" delivered the Clearwater to port, acted as hosts for visitors, and performed in evening

fund-raising concerts. The 1973 concerts had performers who rotated weekly. Some of them did do the ship's chores by day, while others were special guests who only made one or two appearances. Generally speaking, a good deal of energy was spent in maintaining the continuity with the first singing crew of 1969. Besides being interesting from a musical point of view, the idea of sponsoring concerts suggests, again, a renewed exploration of some old sloop ideas. Moreover, it indicates a willingness on the part of the sloop organization to pick up again on ideas which had been out of its central focus for some time.

Some time was spent in the spring of 1973 evolving some possible programs for the exhibit trailer which rested unused for two summers. The new thinking was to use it as a sort of inland sloop. In such a role it could visit villages, parks, and shopping centers which the Clearwater, restricted to river towns, could not. Plans considered included having the trailer host teach-ins, discussions, and film and slide programs at mid-week shopping center stops, and to host community picnics at village and city parks on weekends. Included were to be talks by scientists and politicians, films, music programs, displays, and even video-tapes of local environmental problems. Unfortunately, only some of these ideas materialized over the course of the summer of 1973. What is interesting, for present purposes, is that such community-oriented projects were at least under discussion.

Sloop clubs, which had always been a part of the wider organization, have been, for the most part, fairly uneven. The strength of any one particular group has depended a good deal on how involved individuals within the particular sloop club were. It has been a matter of growing concern within Hudson River Sloop Restoration to strengthen individual sloop clubs and their various projects. One thing this would do would be to vary the types and localities of the sloop organization's programs. Fortunately, feelings against this sort of decentralization have slowly broken down. At the May 1973 meeting of the board of directors, Pete Seeger indicated that a thirty-foot gaff-rig day-sailer had been designed by Cy Hamlin, architect of the Clearwater, which could be built by the various sloop clubs. Presumably, this would mean that the individual clubs could operate sailing programs independent of the main office.

That the sloop organization is loosening the tight sort of stance it had taken on in 1971 is evident from other developments as well. A resolution adopted at the January 1973 meeting of the board of directors called for the drawing up of a policy for the use of volunteer workers. The policy would set guidelines for volunteer workers in the office, at festivals, and in local environmental projects. Considering some of the obstacles would-be volunteers faced at different times in the past, this change reflects a considerable loosening of the central office's attempt to control all Hudson River Sloop Restoration activities.

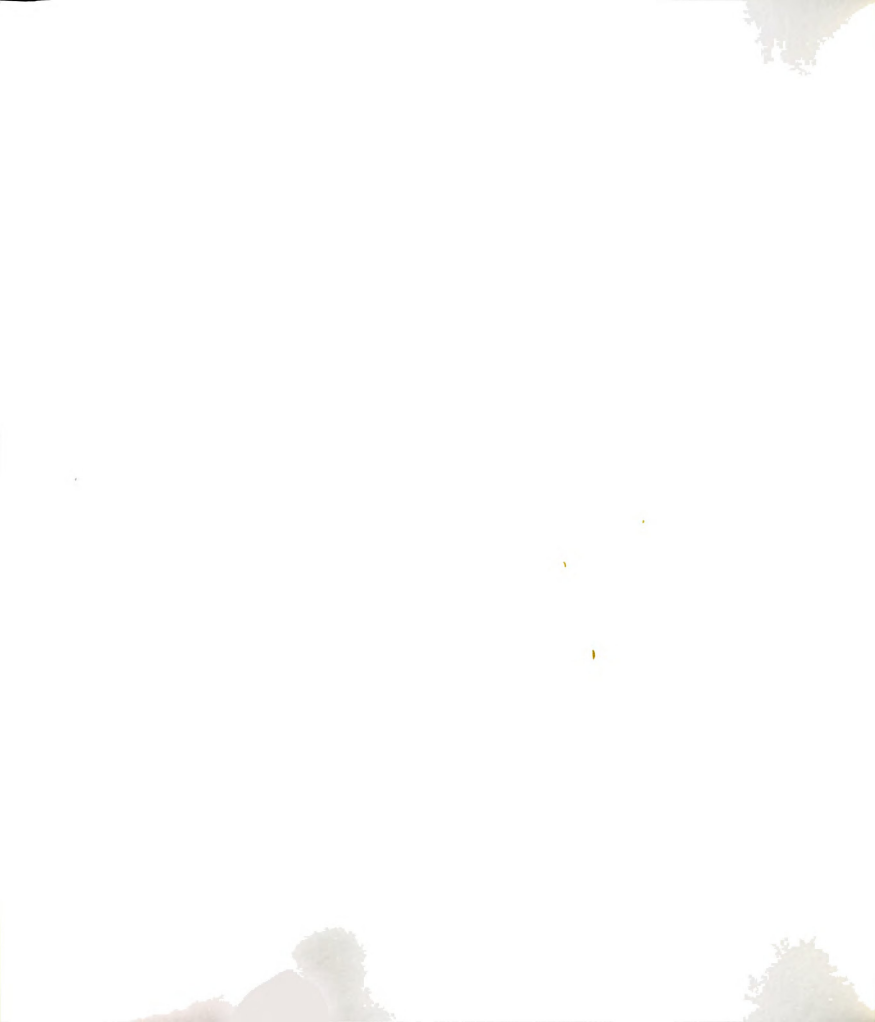
Although the early sloop organization had been, at times, a fairly strong social critic, some directors during the first years of the 1970's had tried to "clean up" the Clearwater's image. During that time, Hudson River Sloop Restoration became a lot less controversial an organization. In fact, a resolution was passed at one point prohibiting Hudson River Sloop Restoration from taking an organizational stand on any issue other than water pollution. Consequently, it was a significant shift in policy when a motion was passed at a board of directors' meeting on March 25, 1973 to endorse an environmental project being carried on by a local organization. Support was to be chiefly in allowing a notice to be made in mailings of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's endorsement. Nevertheless, the opening of this topic for discussion at all represents some change in the tone of Hudson River Sloop Restoration's attempt to control its image. In fact, the minutes of the next meeting of the board of directors carried notice that with the approval of the executive board, the Clearwater flag had been flying at half-mast to recognize the death of Frank Clearwater who had been shot at Wounded Knee. This sort of statement is suggestive of the sort of social activism generally connected with the early history of the Clearwater.

All in all, the profile of Hudson River Sloop Restoration in 1974 is an interesting blend of much of its past. In pieces, it is all there - the history, the music, the environmentalism, the community activism, the constant tug

among various ideas, and to some extent, the social responsibility and consequent involvement in civil liberties. Possibly, as Hudson River Sloop Restoration is maturing as an organization it is taking another look at the beauties of its own childhood. In this light it may be like the prodigal son, who after a trying adolescence filled with attempts at self-definition, can come back again and appreciate its own heritage. Perhaps it is that all of the ideas with which the organization is currently involved have always been blended in varying degrees and as the degrees have changed, so the overall tone of the group. Most probably, a scientific answer is not necessary, but rather what can be said, and said positively, is that the peculiar kind of strength which belongs to the Clearwater, arising as it does out of the diversity of interests and backgrounds of Hudson River Sloop Restoration membership, mark it as a very unique twentieth-century institution. As it exists today, Hudson River Sloop Restoration is probably in its strongest position ever for affecting the kinds of changes in which it has traditionally been interested.



- 1 Pete Seeger, letter to members of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, fall, 1970, document 11.
- 2 For a detailed account of this matter, see Robert Boyle, op. cit., pp. 41-46.
- 3 D. Bendetto, quoted ibid., p. 45.
- 4 John Burns, North River Navigator, March 1973.
- 5 Henry Diamond, New York Times, March 15, 1973, document 12.
- 6 Tom Love, North River Navigator, March 1973, p. 1.
- 7 Hudson River Sloop Restoration board of directors meeting, minutes, January 28, 1973, p. 3.



XI

"These ladies who were working with me didn't know about ecology or what the environment even is. But once they got the idea, once they saw a picture of the sloop, and decided to help...they became, you know, kind of environmentalists...and they may never speak up about anything else...but they've become involved in ways that they never in their lives expected or hoped for."

Mildred Katz, 1972





What, at last, is the Clearwater? Why has a project so local in origins attracted in its evolution so large and diverse a following? What makes camera crews travel half-way around the world to film a boat? Why should an involved citizen in Minneapolis know what some citizens in the Hudson Valley are trying to do?

Perhaps the first answer to the question is prompted by a statement of Jimmy Collier's:

There are several different strains that run through the sloop because, you see, Hudson River Sloop Restoration is really not an organization, it's a coalition.<sup>1</sup>

When one begins to think of Hudson River Sloop Restoration as a coalition rather than as an organization, some things fall into sharper relief. For one thing, while an organization generally draws together like-thinking people, a coalition tends to draw together people of sometimes highly divergent backgrounds whose final aims, even within the grouping, may be quite different. In a sense, it is a pragmatic grouping, a combination devised to solve some immediate problem with the greatest amount of efficiency. And certainly, Hudson River Sloop Restoration is this - drawing together, as it does, people whose frames of reference are at times even mutually exclusive. In the introduction to Sloops of the Hudson, Pete Seeger hints at this when he notes:

The members of Hudson River Sloop Restoration, Inc. are a varied lot - conservative oldsters, bearded students, youths from the ghetto, farmers, teachers, housewives and teen-agers, and small-town merchants. They probably disagree on a thousand things, but they're united in one idea: to sail a

beautiful boat from town to town to help their fellow citizens to learn to love their river again.<sup>2</sup>

This brings to mind another aspect of what the Clearwater is about: a very practical exercise in people working together. A review of its history tells us a good deal about democratic patterns. What does happen when people of different minds try to work in a common cause? Is it possible? At some times in the sloop's short history it seemed the answer was "no". Fortunately, however, as we watch the organization's members learn how to listen to one another, how to draw on one another's strengths, we see a very visible lesson in what can be done. Hudson River Sloop Restoration's current agenda, combining day sails for sixth-graders with concerts, civil court suits with "people's marches", is a long way from the summer of 1970 when people were generally so oversensitive to one another's differences of opinion that the organization ground to a virtual halt. The Clearwater's history suggests what possibilities there are for social action within our political system. It also points up how it may be possible to realistically structure a society composed of people with different interests, ambitions, and goals.

But perhaps these lessons, important as they are, do not really get at the heart of the Clearwater's message. Perhaps what is more significant is what happens not to groups of people, but to each person in particular as she or he goes about working out her or his own existence.

There is a monastery in Japan where the life's work of each monk is to come out each day into a courtyard filled with white sand and begin raking it into mounds, and valleys, and shapes. They carry on this process for the entire day and retire finally at night. When morning comes, they go once again to the courtyard and rake the sand anew into mounds, valleys, and shapes.



There are two lessons here which can be applied to the sloop experience. First of all, the message, or end of the monks' work is what they do with their own hands (the accent being on the doing). In certain ways, the Clearwater is a part of the folk-culture arrival or revival which has been taking place for the last decade and a half in the United States. Beginning with its being built by hand by one of the last of America's old-time shipbuilders, to the raising

of the mainsail which requires the hard work of a dozen deckhands, the Clearwater is an anachronism which accents the connection of a person's work to his or her welfare. Decorated, as the Clearwater is, with handicrafts of many types, hosting festivals which accent home-made food, home-made music, and home-made artifacts, it provides us with a lesson about a human being's more direct relation to his or her environment. In a schizophrenic age where even food and seventy percent of our clothing is synthetic, where there is practically no visible connection between beginnings and endings, between the small part each person makes and the whole which comes off the assembly line a quarter-mile down the way, this aspect of the sloop experience stands out particularly.

The Clearwater points up human beings' search for their connections to their universe in other ways as well. It was Allan Aunapu, the first captain of the Clearwater, who pointed up the deeper meaning in the twentieth-century's use of sails and wind for propulsion. At a time when we are surrounded by every sort of energy crises, and are literally choked to death by inefficient ways of utilizing our fuels, the Clearwater stands a unique symbol. To be a sailor, one must learn to use the winds, to set sails so that locomotion becomes passive, so that natural currents will carry the ship along effortlessly. This points to a world where, instead of shaking one's fist at a hostile universe, each person learns to go placidly in the direction of nature, calmly finding one's own way within its unwritten laws.



There is yet another connection between the Japanese monastery and the Clearwater: the sloop project might well be looked at not as a conclusion, but as a process. True, the goals of Hudson River Sloop Restoration are noble enough: a river we can swim in, air we can breathe; but, perhaps something that is even more important is that a human being discovers himself and experiences the joys and sorrows of what it means to be human not in what at last is accomplished, but rather, like the Japanese monks, in the act of doing, of trying, of striving toward a goal.

Perhaps a parable is appropriate. You decide you are going to have a Thanksgiving dinner, so you invite all of your very best friends. The day is filled with warmth and good cheer. You share together a bottle of wine as one person chops up some vegetables, another rolls out some dough for biscuits, another stirs up a sauce, another stuffs the turkey. All the while, a good time is had by all. Several bottles of wine later, the dinner is in the oven. Meanwhile, everyone goes out for a brisk walk, telling stories, singing songs, laughing, planning. At last, the group returns to the house only to find dinner burnt. When one thinks about it, one realizes that the beauty of the day is not lost because of a poor ending. The joy and sharing that went into the process is what the individual can take away at last.

Looked at through this fable, the sloop project tells yet another tale. Perhaps what is most important in the finite lifetime each of us lives is the quality of that space

of time. If we accept the existential limits of existence, we realize that a human being is left with two alternatives: either one can wait on the beach for the end to come, or, like Zorba, can dance one's world into life.



To the extent that it is enriched by one or another person, project, or experience, we say that it is a good life. One of the kinds of direction which the sloop project has provided is what it has done to the lives of those individuals who have come into contact with it. In this way, its influence has been tremendous. Almost everyone talked to in compiling the Clearwater's story told of how their lives had gone into new, more productive directions as a result of the sloop experience. And that is not to count the lives touched by those touched by the Clearwater. Who is to say how many people are positively influenced by the farm girl

from Wisconsin who comes to be a volunteer crew member on the Clearwater and returns to Wisconsin having learned so many new ways of reaching people, teaching people, touching people? Who is to say what sort of influence a sloop program has upon a man sitting under a tree at the far end of a festival field feeling mean or depressed? Perhaps he returns home and decides, for once, not to kick the dog or shout at his wife.

It was Jimmy Collier who said:

Certainly, the river hasn't been cleaned up at this point, but there are an awful lot of people who, just through the attempt, have got involved in other aspects of cleaning up our society and cleaning up our lives. So, if the river, at this point, never gets cleaned up, the kind of detergent action it has had on people's hearts, and people's souls is significant just in itself....

The Clearwater represents, among many projects that exist in the world today, a way for men to work with other men, and a direction that brings men closer to other men. And herein lies its real value: it has forced people to move, and I have faith that with a lot of people in motion, something can be done to take our society out of the very stagnant situation in which it finds itself today.<sup>3</sup>

If nothing else, the people that have come into contact with the Clearwater have learned a bit about what it means to deal with people of differing principles, have learned something of the real demands inherent in democratic thought. What is probably the finest thing which can be said of the sloop project is that it is part of a continuing chain with evolving effects. The sloop Clearwater has been able to set large numbers of people in motion. These people, like Sojourner Truth's "fireflies in the night" are out doing

things either in conjunction with, or independent from the Clearwater. What is significant, however, is that they have been influenced in a very distinct way by the project. Their programs go on in different states, different countries, different disciplines, but they bear one essential common characteristic: they learned somewhere in the midst of a society which generally leans toward absolutes, the lessons of relativism.



- 1 Jimmy Collier, edited tape transcript, no.1.
- 2 Pete Seeger, intro. Sloops of the Hudson, ob. cit., p.3.
- 3 Jimmy Collier, edited tape transcript, no.2.



## **APPENDIX**





### Music and the Clearwater

A word remains to be said about music and the Clearwater. From the beginning, the sloop project was closely identified with music. The first \$154 had come from a small Pete Seeger concert on the lawn of Ander Saunders' home. Much of the original money necessary to build the sloop and get it afloat also came from benefit concerts which Seeger gave in the late 1960's.

After being launched on May 17, 1969 in Bristol, Maine, the Clearwater was manned by a singing crew which guided it down the New England coast to its home in New York's Hudson River. The crew did the ship's work by day, and performed in evening concerts to help raise money to keep the Clearwater sailing.



The singing crew itself was a good representation of Hudson River Sloop Restoration at large. It was composed of all types of musicians - traditional-topical singers like Pete Seeger, contemporary-folk musicians like Don McLean, civil rights activist-musicians like Jimmy Collier, and traditional British musicians like Lou Killen. The songs, of course, reflected the diversity of the performers. A typical program would include children's songs, work songs, topical songs, sea songs, and others. Moreover, by the second year of sloop festivals, it was quite common for programs to include steel bands, rock music, and appearances by the Hudson Valley Philharmonic.

A Hudson River Sloop Restoration publication entitled Songs and Sketches of the Clearwater Crew was published in 1970. The book, edited by Don McLean, presents a representative selection of the kinds of songs a listener was likely to hear at a sloop concert. The songs chosen reflect a wide variety of tastes and styles.

There were other functions music had in the sloop project besides fund-raising and entertainment. One of these was to help attract volunteers to the Clearwater activities. A concertgoer could be a potential worker once he or she became interested in the sloop project as a whole. Many of the early volunteers came into the project in this way.

Also, music was a good publicity-getter. A great deal of the early press and media coverage the sloop received was due to the concert programs sponsored by the Clearwater.

Music had other important functions as well. As has been long recognized in social movements, music is a good way of attracting people's attention. Once so attracted, it is easier, in turn, to get people to focus on more serious problems such as, in this case, cleaning up a river.

Music within the sloop family tended to help keep things together. Problems and disappointments often could be softened through song. Crew workers could always congregate below deck where a song would sooth aching muscles or disappointment over a rained-out festival.



Music also helped the work go more easily. The purpose of the chantyman on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sailing ships was to lead the crew in singing. Songs helped set the rhythm for certain types of work such as hauling up

the anchor or raising a sail. The sails on these old ships were quite heavy. Raising the Clearwater mainsail takes the concerted effort of a good number of people. If they all pulled out of rhythm, nothing would happen. Pulling together on the same beat or word of a chorus, however, makes the work go more easily.

Finally, there was one other function that music had which is both first and last - its ability to bring people together and communicate something to them about life. People love to listen to songs because they help them understand and share joy, sorrow, love, hope, birth, death. As Jimmy Collier remarked, though words are biased and loaded with connotations, music has the ability to cut through much of that and communicate a feeling or an idea more directly. In a world where communication is so difficult yet so necessary for survival, anything which brings human beings closer to one another is of the first order of importance.

## Afterword

Sunday, May 12, 1974

On Friday of this week the sloop Clearwater will be five years old. Those five years have witnessed, I think, some significant shifts in point-of-view in the United States. The Clearwater was created out of the forward-looking optimism of the mid-1960's. During that period many Americans were looking at the problems of our society and evolving imaginative ways of dealing with them. The belief, generally, was that these problems, in time, would be overcome. Those who refused to deal with the problems specifically were having to deal, at least, with those who were dealing with them. Confrontations, demonstrations, sit-ins - these were some of the tactics; civil rights legislation, clean-water bills, the national guard - these were some of the responses. If nothing else, it was a period which forced people to deal with the fact that there were other people.

With the seventies came many social reverses. As we moved into this era James Taylor wrote a song where he said,

I'm going to cash in my hand,  
And pick up on a piece of land,  
And build myself a cabin back in the woods.  
It's there I'm going to stay  
Until there comes a day  
That this old world starts changing for the good.<sup>1</sup>

Basically, that is just what many of us Americans did - got off the street, went back home, and pulled down the shades. Students became interested in grades, everybody cut their

hair, and social causes were accorded "benign neglect".

This brings us back to the sloop project. The Clearwater, born out of the creative optimism of the sixties, attempted to bring people in contact with some fundamental social issues; the environment was only one of them. It attempted to bring people in contact with other people, to teach them something about the dynamics of social interchange, to help them realize that a society's problems can only be solved when the welfare of all the people composing that society is looked after. While there were some notable successes in the project, it is a sad thing, I think, to have seen it reflect in many ways, the general disengagement of people and movements going on in the society at large.

There are three interesting post-scripts to this story of the Clearwater. The first says something about the sloop organization itself. It is coupled in my mind with an August 1973 phone conversation with J.R. Phillips, current Hudson Sloop Restoration operations director, where I was told that he was spending his time organizing the Clearwater's past and current projects, and was not intending to take on any new ones. The post-script is presented directly from the minutes of the December 16, 1973 meeting of the board of directors. I believe its message is self-evident.

The first order of business was the election of new officers. Michael Sherker made a motion that we vote by secret ballot. The motion carried.

John Burns and Wally Schwane were nominated for

the office of President. Wally Schwane was elected. John Burns was asked to continue to preside.

Grace Parker asked that we consider electing a Chairman of the Board next and nominated John Burns for that position. John declined the nomination.

The Board then decided to go on to the Vice-Presidential nomination. Davidson Gilligan was nominated. Davidson declined and the Board agreed to recess for ten minutes.

After the recess Richard Knabel was nominated for Vice-President. Richard declined. Emerson Burger was nominated. Emerson accepted and became Vice-President.

Angela Magill was nominated for Secretary. Angela declined. The point was made that the Secretary did not have to be chosen from the current Board but could be any member of the Corporation.

Hal Cohen was nominated for Treasurer. Hal declined.

John suggested we adjourn the elections at this time and turn the meeting over to the new President. Wally agreed to preside.<sup>2</sup>

The sort of attitude present at this particular meeting reminds me of the way certain issues were handled this last summer. In particular, I think of how the activist thinking surrounding the use of the festival trailer for the summer of 1973 was left to wither on the vine. I think also of how tightly controlled the sloop concerts were. The highly organized print-out of one person's imagination, they seemed to have hardly any of the spirit or ferment of the '69 or '70 programs.

The second and third post-scripts tell something about the Hudson itself. They suggest that some kinds of entropy may not be inevitable and that, moreover, a project like the

Clearwater experiment may have locked somewhere within its mechanism, the solution to some of the major problems facing our society. The following article concerns Hudson River shad which were taken off the open market some fifteen years ago due to significant traces of oil in the fish.

#### 1000 Attend Free Shadfest

After three days of a blustering nor'easter, the wind and rain let up slightly, and the Beacon Sloop Club held its first annual shadfest on April 29. Several dozen volunteers and cooks from CIA (the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park) sighed as the festivities ended, "It's lucky the weather wasn't better; we had enough shad to go around but we completely ran out of salad and beans. We counted, and almost 1000 people got free shadfish dinners between 2 and 5 PM." Musicians added to the festivities. TV cameras recorded the unanimous verdict: not one shad tasted of pollution.<sup>3</sup>

The last article is from the January 1974 North River Navigator.

#### Happy New Year! The Hudson Is Definitely Cleaner

Normally cautious biologists are now agreed: The Hudson River is cleaner. Concrete evidence: the Dissolved Oxygen content is rising, fish are coming back. Lafayette fish, known locally as "spots", were caught for the first time in 35 years. They are a small and tasty fish, about the size of perch.

Considering that only a small number of sewage plants have been finished and that many industrial plants still discharge untreated wastewater, this is encouraging news; we predict that Hudson beaches can be opened up again when the large sewage treatment plants in New York City and Albany are finished in about five years.<sup>4</sup>



- 1 James Taylor, "Mud Slide Slim", Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon, Warner Brothers, 1971.
- 2 Hudson River Sloop Restoration, minutes - board of directors, December 16, 1973.
- 3 North River Navigator, June/July 1973.
- 4 North River Navigator, December/January 1973-74.

## The Last Word

As I was typing the last page I received a phonecall from a friend in Washington D.C. He told me about the Clearwater's sail up the Hudson in November of 1973. As the boat sailed up past the Statue of Liberty and past New York City there was a feeling of a last sail - perhaps it was the autumn, perhaps it was a consciousness of what had taken place over the five years of the Clearwater's lifetime.

As the boat neared West Point one of the crewmembers who had a friend in some official position at the academy suggested that they try to dock. The ragged crew was given an immediate welcome and asked to dine as guests of the academy. The motley group of them were escorted through the main dining hall, at which point the entire body of 3,400 cadets stood at attention and saluted Pete Seeger. The crew was then ushered into the VIP room and when it was announced that Pete Seeger was to dine there, a standing ovation was accorded him from the main dining hall.

After dinner the crew went down to the boat where there were dozens of schoolchildren assembled. Pete sang for them on the grass.

To Toshi Seeger, my friend wrote a letter saying there's nothing more you can expect to accomplish; to me, he said, "School's over out here."



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