



# STATE LIBRARY NEWS

For the People, the Government and the Libraries of New York State

Summer 2008

## LEGISLATORS: STATE LIBRARY HAS LATEST ON HOT ISSUES

- Same Sex Marriage
- Immigration
- Energy Costs

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## IN MEMORIAM: CYNTHIA LYON

Cynthia Lyon, senior librarian in Reference Services, died July 16, 2008. She joined the staff in 1990. In addition to her work at the State Library, she was active in the Association of Law Libraries of Upstate New York and was a member of the American Association of Law Libraries.

### TELL US

Send comments and questions about the New York State Library and its newsletter to:  
Mary Redmond  
<[mredmond@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:mredmond@mail.nysed.gov)>

## A SALUTE TO A MOMENTOUS JOURNEY

In 1609, Henry Hudson sailed the river that became his namesake. The New Netherland Institute will participate in the statewide celebration of the Quadricentennial of Hudson's momentous trip with these projects:

■ **DISCOVERY AND INVENTION: THE WORLDS OF HENRY HUDSON**, sponsored by the New Netherland Institute and the Museum of the City of New York, will depict the colony's commercial activity. This exhibit will appear at the Museum of the City of New York.

■ **ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNITY: THE DUTCH EXPERIENCE IN THE NEW WORLD**, a series of essays about our Dutch heritage will include an introduction by Russell Shorto, author of *The Island at the Center of the World*.

■ **LIGHT ON NEW NETHERLAND**, a traveling exhibit, will focus on little known information about life in New Netherland.

■ **ILLUMINATING NEW YORK'S DUTCH PAST**, a DVD, will document the New Netherland Project's relationship to modern times.

For more information about these and other Quadricentennial events, call: (518) 486-4815.

## NEW APPOINTMENT



**Jeffrey Cannell**

State Education Commissioner Richard P. Mills recently announced that Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Cultural Education Jeffrey W. Cannell is acting state librarian and assistant commissioner of libraries. This appointment was made following the retirement of Janet Welch.

Serving as deputy commissioner for cultural education since March 2007, Mr. Cannell obtained new legislative funding for public library construction grants, increased aid for library systems, and school library materials. He has also led development of a plan for secure storage for New York's historic treasures. He also obtained funding for curriculum based education programs in museums and other cultural institutions.

For information about the search for a new state librarian and assistant commissioner for libraries, email <[cgraves2@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:cgraves2@mail.nysed.gov)>.

## SPECIAL THANKS

We want to express our deep appreciation to those who joined the Friends of the New York State Library at the \$50 or more levels. Your support is of major significance in sustaining the vital activities of the State Library and the Friends.

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## THE GREENING OF NINETEENTH CENTURY NEW YORK



*Magnolia glauca*

John Torrey's *A Flora of the State of New-York, 1843* is now online. Illustrated with brilliant color plates, the two-volume set provides full descriptions of all of the indigenous and naturalized plants discovered in New York State

at that time. It also includes remarks on the economic and medicinal properties of these plants. Part of the Natural History Survey of New York legislated in 1836, it was the largest single work of its kind when it was first published. Earlier treatises on New York plants, such as Governor Colden's, the *Plantae Coldenhaniae*, published in 1744, were devoted to specific regions or to rare plants. To access Torrey's work, go to the State Library's home page (<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov>), click on Catalog/Digital Collections, select Search Digital Collections, and input Torrey in the search box.

**New York State Library News** is produced by the Friends of the New York State Library and the New York State Library to inform New Yorkers about the collections and services of the State Library.

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This newsletter is not published at state expense.

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<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov>



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- **Celebrate reading.** Check out plans for this year's National Book Festival.
- **Find history in your area.** Search the NYS Museum's database of New York historic markers.

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For more information, call (518) 474-7920

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## NEW NETHERLAND INSTITUTE HOLDS ITS THIRTY FIRST SEMINAR



This twentieth century depiction by **Len Tantillo** of Isaac Jogues (1607-1647) about to embark for France on a Dutch ship echoes the theme of this year's Rensselaerswyck Seminar.

In June 1642, the Mohawks captured and tortured Isaac Jogues, the Jesuit missionary who, along with many other great adventures, was the first European to see Lake George.

"With the help of the Dutch, Jogues escaped 13 months later," said Charles Gehring, director of the New Netherland Institute. "They told him about a ship leaving Fort Orange (Albany) for New Amsterdam (New York City) and he slipped away on it. Later he returned to Europe. Of course, subse-

quently he came back to the New World and was martyred," added Dr. Gehring.

Jogues's close call illustrates the theme of the thirty first Rensselaerswyck Seminar to be held September 13 at the Cultural Education Center in Albany. Speakers noted for their expertise in colonial history will explore interaction among the French, Dutch and Iroquois in seventeenth century North America. For more information about this stimulating seminar, call (518) 486-4815.

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## CELEBRATING MIGHTY MAC



**David B. Steinman**

The year 2008 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the Mackinac Bridge. New Yorker David B. Steinman designed the bridge. His papers are in the State Library's collections.

Spanning the turbulent Straits of Mackinac, the Mackinac Bridge connects Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas. Located on Interstate 75, the southern end of the bridge touches Mackinaw City and the Northern end, St. Ignace. At 8,614 feet, it is the longest suspension bridge in the Western Hemisphere, and the third longest in the world (The longest is Japan's Akashi Kaikyo Bridge at 12,826 feet).

Conception of the Mighty Mac was inspired by the dedication of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1884. Persevering Michiganders pursued the idea for

over 70 years before it became a reality. Although the bridge opened on November 1, 1957, planners worried about bad autumn weather, and so the dedication was delayed until June 26, 1958. As it turned out, November 1 was unusually warm and sunny, and June 26, the first of a four-day celebration, was a cold, blustery day.

David B. Steinman (1886-1960), grew up in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge. He attended the City College of New York and earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University. Deeply impressed by the New York landmark, Mr. Steinman became an engineer and a bridge builder. He taught at the University of Idaho from 1911 to 1915, returned to New York, and eventually formed his own firm. Major projects of Steinman's firm also include the reconstruction of the Brooklyn Bridge; design and construction of the Mount Hope Bridge, Rhode Island; and the Saint John Bridge, Oregon, according to the State Library finding aid, by Fred Bassett, State Library staff. Mr. Steinman also wrote the book, *The Builders of the Bridge: The Story of John Roebling and His Son*, which was made into a movie by Universal Pictures.

For more information about the David B. Steinman Papers, 1907-1960, call (518) 474-6282.

## JUDGING A BOOK BY ITS COVER

"Books From the Victorian Era, 1837-1901," a stunning exhibit of book covers, goes beyond visual pleasure. Focusing on travel and adventure books, the exhibit starts with two volumes published before 1870. Dull, dark covers do little more than protect the pages within. "Although some decorations appear, it was not until the 1870s that technology and ingenuity pushed the decoration of the cover to new heights," says Roger Wilber, State Library staff, and organizer of the exhibit.

In decided contrast to earlier examples, the gleaming gold or silver illustrations stamped on the colorful, post-1870 book covers reflect the era's designation as "The Gilded Age," and all the wealth and industry it implies. As the British Empire spread across the world, steamships, and railroads opened America from coast to coast during a period of territorial expansion, population growth, and increasing travel. The graphics' neo-classical and romantic (with their delight in the exotic) art styles echo the content of the books and signify the great strides of this era. The volumes were selected from the collections of the State Library. To see "Books from the Victorian Era," go to the cases ringing the Library's seventh floor entrance. It's there until November 1.

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New York State Library  
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### State Library Hours

Monday through Friday  
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call  
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