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Cedar Hill: A Case Study in Preservation and Education in a Digital World

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by

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A Brief History of Cedar Hill

In 1876, Cedar Hill was a thriving community at its peak; the presence of two mills provided ample and stable employment for the majority of the town, while those not working at the mills took up jobs that would support the flow of workers. With three hotels and two worker dormitories, millers had abundant lodging for both themselves and their families. By 1902, these mills had been demolished. In fact, Cedar Hill was not Cedar Hill anymore; instead, the hamlet was swallowed up by its neighbor Annandale-on-Hudson. Today, the only clue as to what these now disparate buildings are doing there is the sign for Cedar Hill Road (which is not actually a road but a footpath to Bard College's Shafer House).

Once a highly sought-after location, all that remains of Cedar Hill today is ten buildings, only four of them occupied. Developers, preservationists, and its eventual owners at Montgomery Place alike have not come to a consensus on how these buildings should be used, and many of them have been gutted, leaving only the husk of what the building once was. Cedar Hill as a milling community is long dead. Built with ephemeral materials like wood that have a limited lifespan and maintaining a modest presence (save for the grand Swiss Factory Lodge), the built environment and identity of Cedar Hill are not visible. The legacy of working-class communities is not preserved to the same degree as upper-class communities, if at all. This project will allow viewers to visit Cedar Hill (now Annandale-on-Hudson) as it stood over a century ago, reconstructed in virtual reality. This interactive exhibition will retell an important aspect of Hudson Valley local history, in this case, its mill communities, which do not get preserved in the archeological record and are not as closely maintained as its neighboring communities of Bard College and Montgomery Place. The project will analyze the structures'

changing purposes, as well as their changing architectural qualities, to trace the story of the hamlet's decline.

After Historic Hudson Valley (HHV), a not-for-profit preservation organization, purchased Montgomery Place in 1986, developers and preservationists alike began to seriously consider the state that Cedar Hill was in. In March of 1987, Jackie Haley of Historic Hudson Valley submitted a thorough account of the history of Cedar Hill which traced its history from its purchase in 1688 through its dissolution during the Great Depression.[1] A few months later, the Montgomery Place Estate commissioned architectural firm Beyer Blinder Belle to conduct a survey of the area for potential developments. This document drew heavily from Haley's research.[2] By April of 1988 another researcher at Historic Hudson Valley, Pamela Goddard, published an even more extensive survey of the area from its origins as "matambesson" under Algonquin settlement up to the 1930s, after the Annandale post office was moved to what used to be Cedar Hill and the hamlets merged.

In its heyday, Cedar Hill once boasted over 30 buildings, including a blacksmith's shop, a carpentry shop, a bar, an ice cream shop, and three hotels. Its landscape made it relatively dense for a hamlet; at one point either side of River Road was lined with buildings quite close to the road, and the negative space was filled with trees.[3] Most of the residences followed a similar typology: stone foundation, framed wooden construction, and end chimneys. Most of these details can be traced back to the Dutch presence in Dutchess County since the 17th century.

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[1] Jackie Haley to Bill Pfeifer, memorandum, "Working History of Annandale/Cedar Hill," March 5, 1987, Stevenson Library, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY.
[2] Beyer Blinder Belle, *Annandale-on-Hudson Phase 1: Survey and Analysis*, Annandale-on-Hudson (New York, NY, 1987), xiii.
[3] The majority of homes and businesses in Cedar Hill were situated along River Road (see map on page 15)

However, many of the buildings also reflect a wave of English immigrants and their architectural tendencies, such as flatter, one-dimensional facades without gables and less attention to the porch.

The hamlet's proximity to the Saw Kill River provided the energy required to power the two mills, which attracted scores of Irish and English immigrant laborers. In the mid-19th century, the majority of the population was employed either at the wool or grain mill or on small farms. The farms (most of which were owned by the Montgomery Place Estate) harvested mostly apples, and wheat to be processed at the mill into flour. Sheep were in abundance around the area and their wool was processed into yarns, carpets, and blankets. This range of materials made Cedar Hill relatively self-sustaining, while producers made additional profits by shipping these goods to New York City from the port or railroad in Barrytown just south of Cedar Hill.

In the 1860s and '70s, the residents of Cedar Hill participated in a wide array of communal activities. Multiple parties, balls, and concerts were held in the Thompson House (then called the Union Hotel), and a fowl hunt was held on New Year's Day. Perhaps the most consistent tradition in Cedar Hill was its Fourth of July celebrations, which started in the mid-nineteenth century and lasted through the late 1880s. This celebration was a part of a larger series of summer picnics, eight of which were held on Staat's Grove (east of C.P. Robinson's store) in just one summer. These events were advertised in *The Red Hook Journal*, encouraging participation from the neighborhoods of Red Hook, Barrytown, and Tivoli.[4] Cedar Hill was more than a collection of workers united by their industry; it was an extended community of friends and families in and beyond the hamlet itself.

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[4] *The Red Hook Journal* (Red Hook, NY). "Opening Pic-Nic." N.p., June 6, 1873.

By 1900, however, these community get-togethers had all but disappeared. There were no more picnics, parties, or duck hunts in the neighborhood. Both the wool and grist mills had been shut down and demolished, the latter replaced by the W. H. Baker chocolate factory.[5] The majority of homes were purchased by wealthy Hudson Valley real estate moguls Charles and Francis Zabriskie. They changed its name to Annandale, merging the community with the hamlet directly north of it. From this moment onward, the buildings of what was once Cedar Hill would be used for housing tenants, the majority of whom were affiliated (either as students or faculty) with the college; the space then functions as overflow residential and office space.

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[5] While this factory provided over 40 jobs to local residents, by 1904 the factory would be demolished and the business moved to Red Hook.

Reviving Forgotten Histories

While the histories of the adjoining areas, Bard College and Montgomery Place, have

been told through many published works, the history of Cedar Hill exists in mere bits and pieces.

While the Hudson Valley historians in the 1980s attempted to tell the story of the hamlet,

documents are not only hard to find, but they are incomplete. Jackie Haley notably confessed so

in the first few lines of her "Working History of Annandale/Cedar Hill":

> I emphasize "working" because I do not want to be held to anything in this document that
> is based on reminiscences without supporting documentation. Unfortunately, that means
> that much of the preliminary work dealing with the industries and small stores, etc. in
> Cedar Hill in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century is
> supposition.[6]

Because of historians' gaps in their data regarding the hamlet, I wanted to set about retelling its

story through what I could confidently research and analyze: its built environment. While many

Cedar Hill residents, businesses, and events are lost in time and cannot be recovered, its

buildings, both standing and destroyed, are referenced in historical texts and recorded with

almost complete accuracy save for the few that were not preserved in plans, maps, or

photographs. For the most part, however, there is sufficient material to allow scholars to rebuild

the hamlet as it once stood at several points in time from the 1860s onward.

My project aims to gather these disparate pieces of information to tell the larger story. As

Dolores Hayden notes in *Power of Place*, working-class histories are not incorporated into our

built environment in the same manner as white, wealthy, and male histories.

> Care is not taken to preserve the spatial history of ordinary working people and their
> everyday lives. A few buildings or even small districts may be preserved for their
> architectural excellence—often the houses, clubs and business places of the wealthy. …

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[6] Jackie Haley to Bill Pfeifer, memorandum, "Working History of Annandale/Cedar Hill," March 5, 1987,
Stevenson Library, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY.

To save this architecture, however good it is stylistically, is to also preserve the identity of the White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, male elite who commissioned [these] structures from which many citizens were often excluded. In contrast, modest urban buildings that represent the social and economic struggles of the majority of ordinary citizens—especially women and members of diverse ethnic communities, are often overlooked when it comes to historic preservation. The power of place to nurture social memory—to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory—remains untapped for most working people's neighborhoods in most American cities.[7]

This inequality in preservation pushes already marginalized communities even further toward the periphery of our collective memory. Without their representation in our public spaces, these histories run the risk of being forgotten—not by books and records, which only a select few have total access to, but by the public memory. The lives of ordinary citizens, Hayden explains, can be just as revealing as the written histories, lives, and architectures of our nation's "heroes," such as the Founding Fathers and Civil War generals.[8]

In Cedar Hill's case, however, there are no millers living among the community today to be reintroduced to their history, and therefore my efforts in education and preservation cannot necessarily address a milling or working-class audience. Instead, my project must remain inclusive enough for any viewer to gain an understanding of the place's unique history. Hayden's analysis has informed my own perspective on the life and landscape of the hamlet. Following the extensive surveys executed in the 1980s, Historic Hudson Valley (HHV) designated only two buildings in Cedar Hill with New York State Environmental Protection Fund status: the Swiss Factory Lodge and Spurr Cottage. These buildings were then given plaques marking their designation. This comes as no surprise; Spurr Cottage is the oldest of all the buildings in the hamlet (its origins dating back to the Revolutionary War) and the Swiss Lodge is the largest with

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[7] Dolores Hayden, "The Power of Place: Claiming Urban Landscapes as People's History," *Journal of Urban History* 20, no. 4 (August 1994): 467.

[8] Ibid, 470.

the most ornate features and was built by renowned nineteenth-century rural American architect A. J. Davis. In installing these plaques, HHV imposed a hierarchy onto the hamlet's structures. The plaques offer no information on what the buildings are, what happened there, and why they were given preservation status. For the viewer reading the signage alone without its historical context, what happened in these spaces is of little importance; buildings are instead "ranked" by their aesthetic qualities. Visitors of the area who see these plaques and wish to seek out more information will be at a loss. Nothing about the building is mentioned on the plaque, only that it was renovated and protected by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

As Hayden laments, our current method of historical preservation has limited our understanding of our own local history and heritage. To fully capture a city's history, it is important to tell the stories of ordinary citizens rather than the "heroes" valorized in public statues, which offer only a small (and often a white, wealthy, and male) view of a space's story.

While visitors might recognize the names of the Montgomerys, Bartons, and Crugers who bought and divided the land, few would recall the names of John Plass or Edward Harris, for example, who shaped the community and fostered strong relationships within the hamlet through their many parties, balls, and picnics. And why should they? As it stands now, Cedar Hill exists as a threshold between Bard College and the Montgomery Place campus the college acquired in January 2016. The names of the Crugers and Montgomerys are etched into the buildings, hamlets, and roads across Dutchess County and the Mid-Hudson Valley. While members of the community may not be aware of John Cruger's role in shaping the area, he is nevertheless immortalized in one of Bard's dormitories and the small island just to the west of it. Plass, Harris, and names of other Cedar Hill citizens, however, do not survive in our built environment.

Figure 1: Screenshots from *Cedar Hill, 1876* and *Cedar Hill, 1902* of the Bathrick House (images by author)

Rather than tell the hamlet's history through its relationships to the larger entities of

Montgomery Place and Bard College (which was Haley and Gaertner's tendency), perhaps

Hayden's method could offer us a more diverse and revealing perspective on Cedar Hill. In

doing so, we as both citizens and historians might shift our focus from the wealthier, more

well-documented histories to a working-class history that has long been ignored. To implement a

new method of viewing history in line with Hayden, virtual reality (VR) offers the experience of

living in a space rather than an overview that may gloss over important details in the life of that

city. In Cedar Hill's case, we might better comprehend its life cycle through its visual

transformation if viewers are offered two models: one placing them within the hamlet's peak as a

community and another after its decline. I chose to represent Cedar Hill's population peak in

1876 and its moment of transition in 1902, the year after both mills had been torn down and the

year before the chocolate factory was moved to Red Hook. As well as offering a much closer and

more personal look at the space thanks to virtual reality's inherently immersive mode of viewing,

the viewer can then shift quickly from one specific point in time to another, which makes

comparisons between the "before" and "after" much clearer to follow chronological changes in the community (Figure 1).

While this technology is under two decades old and is still rapidly improving, using VR for the historical, cultural, and educational analysis of communities is by no means an unprecedented endeavor. One of the earliest adopters of VR in public education was the Foundation of the Hellenic World, a Greek cultural heritage institution based in Athens. In their untitled virtual reality project from 2000, the team created a digital reconstruction of landmarks that are today in ruins. Viewers (in their case, mostly children) could view the structures as they stood hundreds and even thousands of years prior.[9] In doing so, Greek children might have felt a deeper connection to the spaces they occupy. While the poor graphic quality of the space can be somewhat reconciled by the technology's greenness at the time, the researchers' efforts to make the interface more like a video game than a replica of real space diminishes the project's value as a tool in historical analysis.

VR's seamless integration of photographs, maps, plans, and text has made it an attractive option for many scholars and artists analyzing space, as archeologists Kyle Knabb, Thomas Levy, et al noted in their "Scientific Visualization, 3D Immersive Virtual Reality Environments, and Archaeology in Jordan and the Near East" project in 2014.[10] The research team emphasized the importance of creating 3D models for spaces that either no longer exist or many people cannot visit. Without it, spaces may be lost and long forgotten, with only disparate plans and

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[9] Athanasios Gaitatzes, Dimitrios Christopoulos, and Maria Roussou, "Virtual Reality Interfaces for the Broad Public," *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*, 2001, 3.
[10] Kyle A. Knabb et al., "Scientific Visualization, 3D Immersive Virtual Reality Environments, and Archaeology in Jordan and the Near East," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 77, no. 3 (September 2014): 228, https://doi.org/10.5615/neareastarch.77.3.0228.

photographs to serve as evidence of its existence. In their case, virtual reality bridged these gaps to provide information to both professionals and non-professionals in the fields of archeology in order to showcase the data they had acquired regarding some of Jordan's forgotten cultural landmarks. They shared their findings with an audience larger than just experts and readers of archeological journals through a public viewing. It is therefore crucial that the interface be simple and intuitive enough to be picked up and used by non-experts in the field.
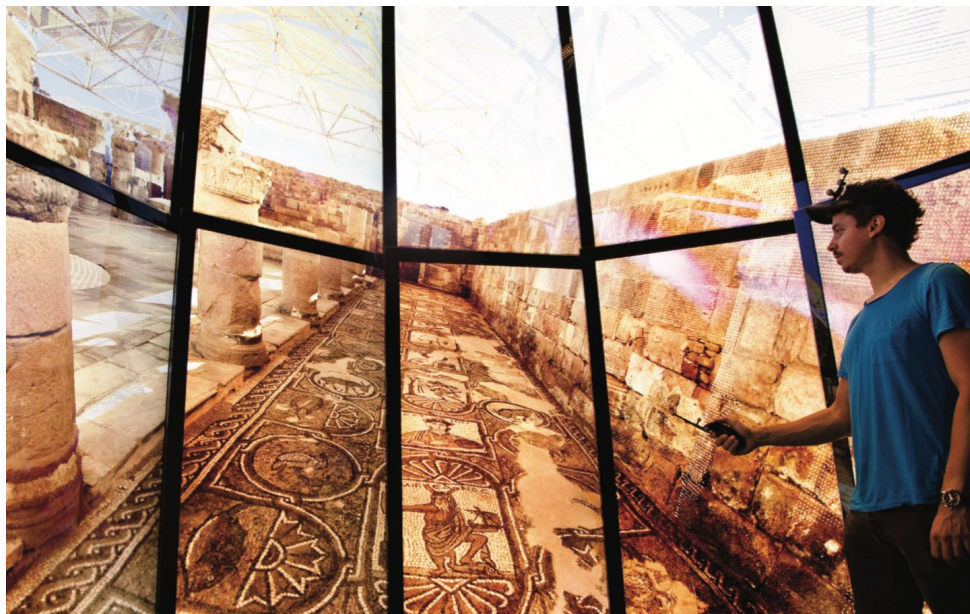

Figure 2: A user exploring a Byzantine church via TourCAVE (Kyle Knabb et al.)

While extensive, their implementation of displaying their research does not immerse the viewer in the rendered space—the viewer is not immersed in the space via headset and instead views several screens forming a large cylinder, which they named the "TourCAVE" (Figure 2). While this allows more than one person to view the virtual space, it does not offer the more

personal connection to the space that immersive VR technology offers, which is the goal of my project.

A notably immersive VR experience, Dr. Bryan Carter's 2018 *Virtual Harlem* project allowed its audience to visit the Cotton Club, the Apollo Theatre, and other significant spaces during Harlem's heyday as a cultural hotspot in the 1920s. This project cites itself as "one of the first recorded attempts and creating an interactive virtual environments with this graphic quality which focuses on African American life and culture."[11] Carter and his team's efforts to reiterate the importance of spaces in our cultural memory are successful—clubs, theatres, and libraries that are today no longer in existence can be visited virtually in high graphic detail, with the sounds of the Harlem Renaissance woven throughout. Visitors can walk through the Cotton Club and hear Ethel Water's rendition of "Stormy Weather" and even "interact" with its virtual patrons.

Figure 3: Stills from *Virtual Harlem* (Dr. Brian Carter)

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[11] "VirtualHarlemDemo." Video file, 02:12. Vimeo. Posted by Brian Carter, 2014. https://vimeo.com/71272622.

This, however, is where the problem with virtually representing the past lies—while walking through the space the viewer should feel a seamless interaction with the virtual representation they see and the movements they make. My viewing experience, however, was disrupted by seeing digital human beings walking around the space. Because VR technology is still in its nascent stage, rendering a human being does not produce the illusion of reality that still architectural elements provide. Instead, in *Virtual Harlem* I immediately felt as though I was immersed in the world of The Sims video games (Figure 3). To better immerse the viewer in a space, the creator must be careful not to include elements which may break the illusion, which is largely the reason why I had excluded the presence of any people in my models. Nonetheless, Carter's success in reimagining spaces of marginalized communities through transforming public memory makes the project an excellent case study in retelling forgotten histories.
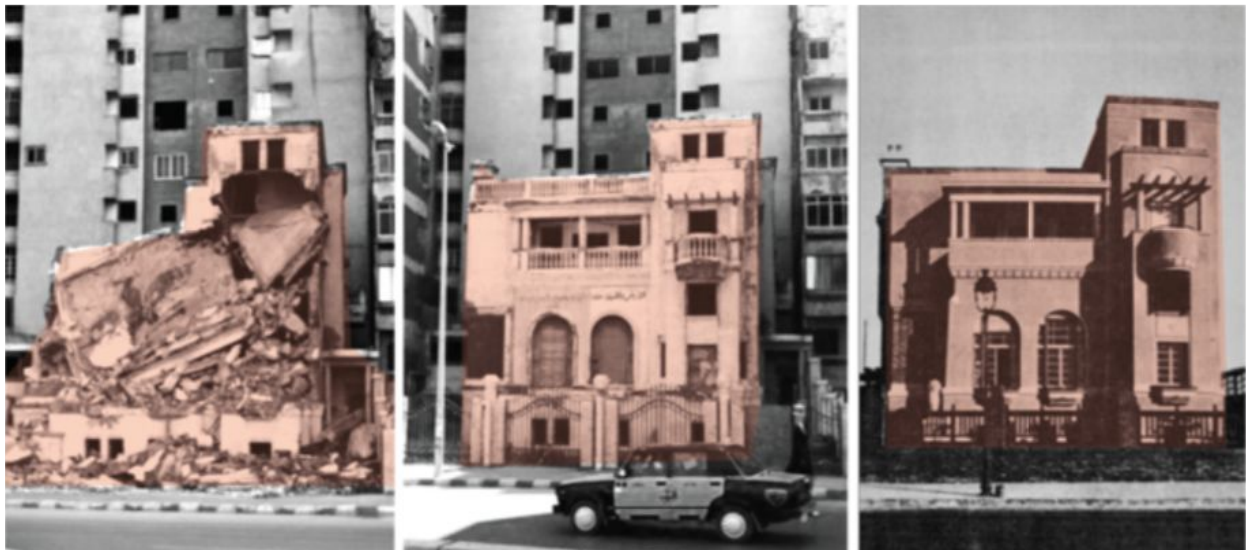

Figure 4: A time lapse of urban deterioration in Alexandria (Heba Aggour)

The project that most parallels my own goals in documenting the life cycle of spaces and documenting the life cycles of spaces is Heba Aggour's 2017 *Save Alex* project. Aggour, an

architect and urban planner based in Alexandria, Egypt, integrates old photographs with his models of buildings in his city to create a dynamic virtual experience. Like my project, *Save Alex* places the viewer in the city's moments of transition, primarily in which structures were renovated or destroyed (Figure 4). Aggour was primarily concerned with the quickly changing city's lack of a cohesive history; as the ancient structures of Alexandria are demolished and replaced with skyscrapers, how can its residents form any meaningful connection to the city's history? By stitching together maps, photographs, and aerial images, Aggour was able to recreate the ancient city for the purpose of engaging local citizens with their own heritage rather than a kind of virtual tourism.[12] The emphasis placed on refamiliarizing, not just introducing the space, is particularly pertinent to my project as many of its viewers will be members of the Bard and Red Hook community that are likely already familiar with Cedar Hill as a place they occupy but not with its rich history. However, it is essential that my project be legible, informative, and relevant to anyone who might view the virtual scenes, not only those who recognize the space.

Using CAD programs Blender and SketchUp, each Cedar Hill home (with sufficient visual evidence) has been "rebuilt" as it stood in 1876 and 1902 by drawing from architectural plans, photographs, maps, and paint analyses.[13] The occupants of the home were found via Federal and New York State Census records, historical interviews, and maps. Information on the events and lives of individuals (much of which was found through the *Red Hook Weekly Journal*) is added to the model in the form of interactive captions.

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[12] Heba Aggour, "Virtual Reality: Towards Preserving Alexandria Heritage by Raising the Awareness of the Locals," *ArchNet International Journal of Architectural Research* 11, no. 3 (2017): 95, https://doi.org/10.26687/archnet-ijar.v11i3.1390.

[13] Jablonski Berkowitz Conservation, Inc., *Selective Exterior Paint Color Investigation* (n.p., 2005), 19-22.

Results

Figure 5: A Bard student explores the chocolate factory in *Cedar Hill, 1902* (photo by author)

On the day of the project's test exhibition, I divided the group into two sections: one would view the VR first, the other would learn about the history Cedar Hill through a short textual walkthrough before viewing it in VR (see Appendix). I had originally planned for the VR group to not read the printed text and instead read them through captions within the virtual space; unfortunately, these captions were not optimized for VR and did not make use of the dual-screen system, designed to cover each eye and provide the illusion of three-dimensional space (Figure 5). To remedy this, the VR group simply read the text after they had visited the virtual space.

After a brief questionnaire regarding their previous interactions with the site, viewers were asked to answer three open-ended questions: *Does Cedar Hill represent a working-class community to you? What led to Cedar Hill's decline?* and *Do you see any issue with how Cedar*

Hill's history is preserved in our built environment? Their responses provided tremendous

insight into the project's overall effectiveness. Several of these responses claimed the project had

made them reassess their assumptions regarding working-class communities; in response to the

first question, one viewer wrote "No. When I think of working-class I think of urban areas with

large and diverse immigrant communities." Another wrote "I don't think of working-classes

living in such beautiful homes," while another viewer claimed the hamlet resembled a

working-class community in 1876, but not 1902. This data shows a profoundly variant definition

of the phrase "working-class," (a concept that I had hoped viewers would confront) as well as

viewers' ability to notice social and economic changes through visual information. Many

viewers had a strong grasp on the effect of the mill's disappearance and the chain reaction that

followed. One wrote, "Most people depend[ed] on the nearby factories and mills, even if they

[didn't] work in them directly," and another asserted that "if the town was orbiting around the

mills and the mill goes down, the community disperses."

Some left the exhibition in frustration over the state of Cedar Hill today. One viewer

noted, "most of the Bard community could benefit from knowing literally anything about being

working-class," which is an aspect of my project I had not even considered until then: what

responsibility does my project hold as a documentation of working-class life when exhibited in

an affluent setting like Bard College? I believe this project succeeded in informing viewers about

what is at stake when an industry in a working-class community disappears and why the histories

of working-class communities are so often lost. As one viewer wrote, "narratives of local history

… favor estate culture as it relates to wealthy Hudson Valley families."

Some, of course, were off the mark. For example, one viewer's explanation for Cedar Hill's decline involved a "weakening of social cohesion," that led to its economic downturn rather than vice versa.[14] Many of the responses' inaccuracies might be attributed to the viewer's lack of attention when reading the captions. One viewer in attendance asked "Do we *have* to read these?" to which I responded, "no, I cannot force you to read anything." I am beginning to suspect I should have responded "yes." But this is one of the pitfalls in using virtual reality for education—VR's visual and immersive qualities, as well as the newness and inaccessibility of the technology, renders many users more interested in the act of movement and exploration rather than the information the project is attempting to convey.

Another danger to this method of pedagogical praxis is a tendency to regard the given information as the whole truth. When confronted with a near-complete replica of the hamlet, it is all the more difficult for the user to determine what aspects of the space are wholly accurate and what had to be estimated. For example, nearly every demolished building has little or no data regarding the placement of doors and windows that were not captured in photographs. For these challenges, it is better to guess than to omit—surely a lack of back doors and windows is more misleading to the viewer than the very likely possibility that they were not placed in their exact original position. Of course, there were structures in the hamlet that simply had no visual data. These structures were denoted by a large white cube with a question mark jutting out (Figure 6). Viewers could at least have a sense of scale and spatial relationship, albeit of a large white box that would have never existed there. Luckily, this last-resort effort was applied to only two of the eighteen structures.

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[14] Approximately 82% of responses attributed an economic downturn to Cedar Hill's decline as a community.
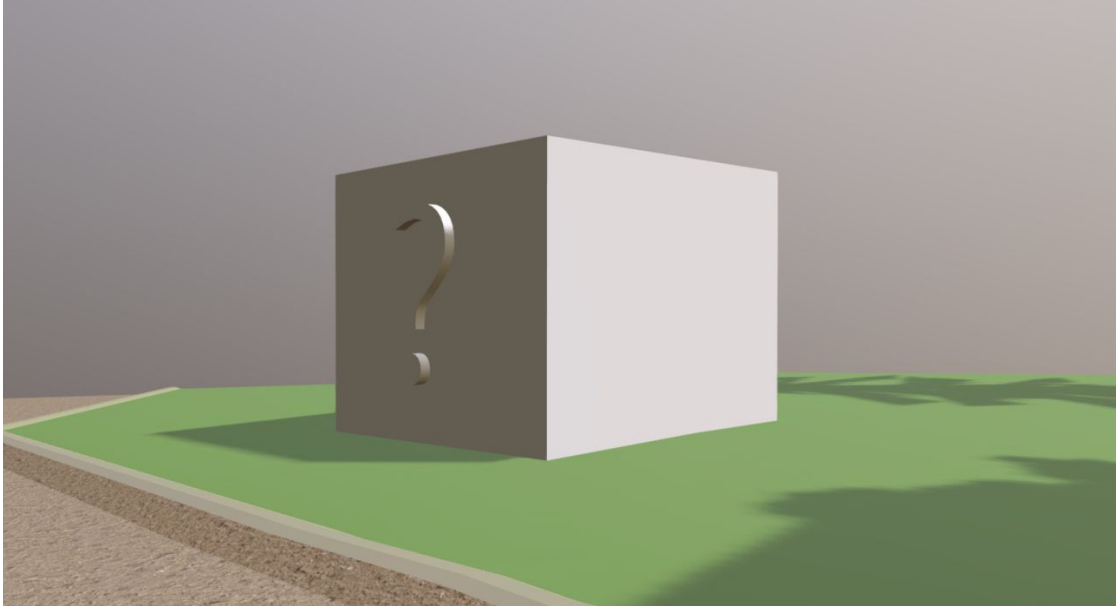
Figure 6: Screenshot from *Cedar Hill, 1902*, Hay Wiggan's house (image by author)

Likewise, rhetorical strategies must be used in a VR project in a similar manner to a textual project, and that these strategies will doubtlessly influence the created space. This issue might manifest not only in the virtual built environment but also the supplemental information given through captions, for example. To circumvent this issue, VR authors must take great care in providing full transparency of the goals, strategies, and any guesses made in the project via captions. These can serve as a reminder to the audience that what they are viewing is a recreation, not an exact replica. Because the captions are not a part of the built environment per se and instead act as floating, placeless text, their addition will not diminish spatial accuracy but enhance it. In doing so, we as VR authors can faithfully represent the stories we want to tell.

Furthermore, virtual reality as it exists today is not an accessible tool. Simply put, it is expensive. While cheaper models such as the Google Cardboard can be purchased for as low as five dollars, these viewers rely on the user's smartphone as both a game engine and a display

system. Viewing large models (in my case, over 300 megabytes) can be frustrating if not impossible. The load time is astronomical, often taking several hours, or may simply never load at all, which was, unfortunately, the case for my test exhibition. Instead, viewers had to wait to use the computer-connected HTC Vive headset rather than use the two additional Google Cardboards. While this was not detrimental to my project, two people left the exhibition without viewing the VR. This might have been prevented by purchasing additional Vive headsets, however, these devices currently cost five hundred dollars each, which was far out of my budget. For museums, schools, and galleries this may be a viable option; however this is not the case for individuals who wish to share their virtual spaces with a larger audience.

Nevertheless, the immersion that the headsets provide offers an exciting development in the future of historical studies. An ideal application of this technology might take advantage of VR's intimacy and immersion in the subject matter. Using a more personal and experiential mode of storytelling, virtual technology serves as a powerful tool for creating a more empathetic relationship to the subject. Empathy is a great catalyst for change—to know what is at stake not only logically but sympathetically when, for example, a community disappears or a population is displaced, can raise further awareness and stimulate potential action.

Appendix: A Guided Tour of Cedar Hill
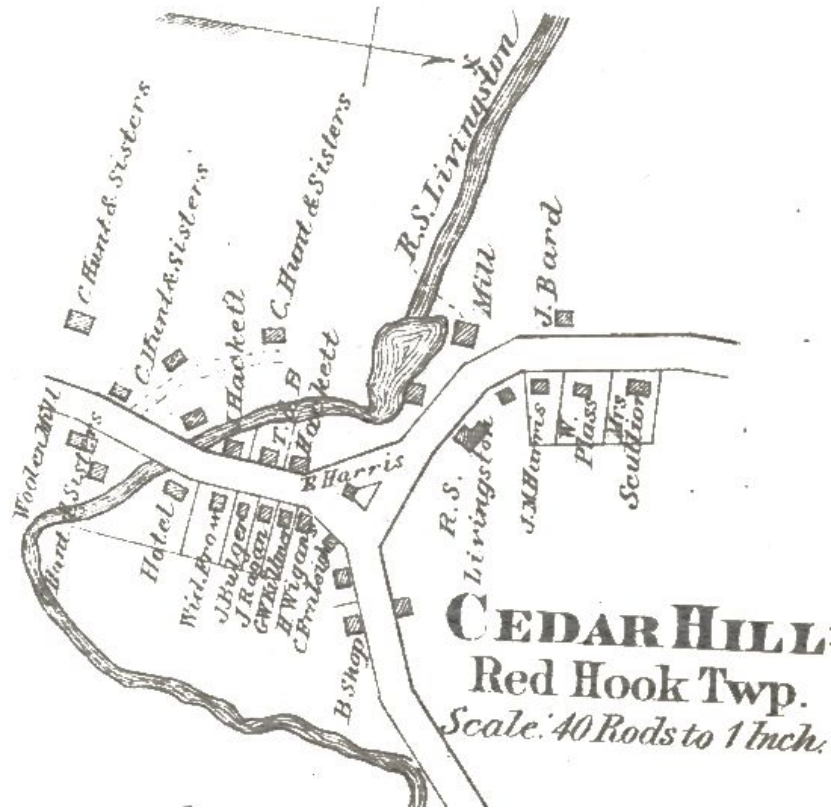
Map of Cedar Hill, 1876 (O.W. Gray & Son)

Welcome to Cedar Hill! Today is July 4, 1876, and the citizens of Cedar Hill are celebrating the American Centennial with a picnic on the lawn of General Staats. This hamlet has two mills, one for wool and one for grain, placed along the banks of the Saw Kill River. The majority of residents work at these mills. The street is lined with newly planted saplings, a sign of optimism for this community's future and an anomaly in most working-class communities. The following text will provide a walkthrough of the hamlet. The following images are the oldest available photos of the structure.

The Hotel: One of three hotels in the hamlet, this business is run by Edward Harris and provides ample opportunity for community get-togethers. Here, Harris hosts New Year's Eve parties followed by an open-invitation New Year's Day duck hunt advertised in the Red Hook Journal. Two years ago, Mr. Harris began selling ice cream from the general store within the hotel, attracting the community members of Cedar Hill, Barrytown, and Red Hook and as well as the hamlet's visitors.*

The Hotel, 1900 (Montgomery Place Orchards)   Annandale Hotel, 1925 (Montgomery Place Orchards)

The Annandale Hotel: This building and the two structures flanking it are owned by the Hackett family. While we know this building was a hotel, its operations were not closely recorded or advertised as publicly as the events hosted by Edward Harris or John Plass, who owns and operates the Union Hotel just south of this building. We do know that the younger Hackett boy, Thomas, frequently ran himself into trouble, and a decade from now would be charged with assault and battery.

Wiggans' House: This is the home of Mr. Hay Wiggans, a boatman. While likely not renting and selling boats from his Cedar Hill home, he does live in close proximity to the Hudson River as well as a port in Barrytown, just south of this neighborhood, where he likely conducts most of his business.* **

Briggs House: This residence is occupied by George Killmer, a seamster. Considering the size of this house, this home likely houses some mill workers as was common in many large homes in Cedar Hill.

Briggs House, 1987 (Beyer Blinder Belle)   Bulger's home, 1900 (Montgomery Place Orchards)

Walters House: This is the home of the Reagan family. John Reagan, a second-generation Irish blacksmith, is likely employed by the Montgomery Place Estate southwest of the hamlet. His shop can be found next to the Wiggans' house. Soon, John will move with his family to Brooklyn to become a successful businessman, but will return to Cedar Hill in the summers.

Bulger's House: While the modest homes of Cedar Hill do not grab the attention of passersby as much as the Swiss Cottage (the chalet-style home seen across the Saw Kill), each has their own distinct architectural embellishments. Although throughout the hamlet certain motifs and patterns are adhered to, this house, tucked away in a backyard thick with trees, boasts a unique lattice column on the front porch not featured in any of the other Cedar Hill structures. This home is occupied by John Bulger, an Irish immigrant raising a family of seven.*

Bathrick House: There are few clues as to who lives here at this time, other than the notation "Wid. Erow" that labeled this property on a map. It is likely, however, that this home houses mill workers as well.


Bathrick House, 1987 (Beyer Blinder Belle)

Thompson House, 1987 (Beyer Blinder Belle)

Thompson House: Although this structure closely resembles the other residential buildings in its proximity, The Union Hotel takes in summer boarders, traveling workers, and tourists alike. Its owner, John Plass, hosts regular parties, balls, and concerts here advertised publicly in the Red Hook Journal throughout the 1870s as The Union Hotel.

The Woolen Mill: This mill makes use of the abundant sheep in the area, processing their wool into clothing and carpets. The woolen mill enjoyed a major boost in profits in the last decade making uniforms for the Civil War. Since then, profits have been in steady decline, rendering the future of this mill uncertain.
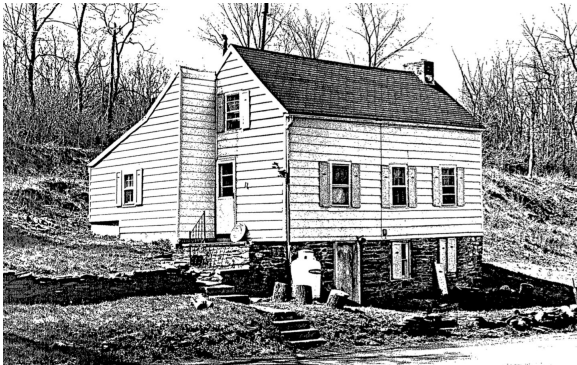
Spurr Cottage, 1987 (Beyer Blinder Belle)

Swiss Factory Lodge, 1987 (Beyer Blinder Belle)

Spurr Cottage: This is the oldest building in Cedar Hill, dating back to the Revolutionary War. It is not known who currently lives here.

Swiss Factory Lodge: This building is formally quite different from the other homes in the neighborhood; built by renowned American architect A.J. Davis (who designed much of Montgomery Place's built environment), this Swiss-chalet style structure was designed to house mill workers and their families. As a highly visible work of architecture, the ornate details of this building set it apart from the other homes and more closely resembles the buildings of Montgomery Place.

North Cottage: This building serves the same purpose as the Swiss Factory Lodge and provided housing for many mill workers and their families. Set much further back from the road and much plainer in appearance, this structure is somewhat overshadowed by the Swiss Lodge.

Welcome back to Cedar Hill! The year is 1902 and the residents are, again, out celebrating the Fourth of July. This year, however, the celebration will not take place within the hamlet. Instead, they're traveling to the neighboring communities of Red Hook, Tivoli, or Barrytown for the holiday. Nowadays, Cedar Hill does not attract many visitors through communal events; instead, outsiders are visiting Cedar Hill only to meet individuals who live there. Its borders are now unclear, with many sources claiming this area to be Annandale when in fact it would not officially be called Annandale until the 1930s. Cedar Hill has undergone major changes since our last visit—explore the area and see for yourself!

River Road, Cedar Hill, 1900 (Montgomery Place Orchards)

The Hotel: This structure will be demolished within the next twenty years. There have been no New Year's Eve parties or duck hunts advertised here since the 1880s.

Erwin Smith's house: This is most likely the home of Erwin Smith, who owns a general store operating from the adjacent hotel. This house will be demolished as early as 1910.*

Michael Ford's house: Likely the home of Michael Ford, an Irish stationary engineer, this house will be demolished as early as the 1950s.*

Ford's home, 1954 (Montgomery Place Orchards)   Bathrick House, 1900 (Montgomery Place Orchards)

Briggs House: This house is occupied by Webster Killmer, a carpenter raising a family of eight. His business, however, is no longer in Cedar Hill.

James H. Dennis's house: This is the home of James H. Dennis, who works at the chocolate factory on the northern end of the hamlet. This house will be demolished within the next decade.*

Bathrick House: After the mills were shut down, Cedar Hill saw a variety of new business pop up, however none of them will last for more than a few years. This structure's form and function have changed dramatically over the past thirty years, now serving as a horseshoeing facility rather than a residence (although it is not impossible this structure serves as both).

Thompson House: This is the home of the Thomas E. Thompson, who lives with his family and takes in boarding laborers. It no longer functions as a hotel. He currently works in a livery stable, although it is not likely he worked in Cedar Hill as there is not enough space for horses and no stables constructed. In a few years (seven, to be exact), Thompson will erect a greenhouse and grow a thriving violet market, only for it to be demolished a few years afterward.

Spurr Cottage: This house is occupied by Jacob W. Coon, a seamster, and his family of six.

Swiss Factory Lodge: The Lodge likely housed six employees of the chocolate factory, including Fred Sown. There is capacity for a much larger group, and this may indicate that fewer Cedar Hill residents are employed at the chocolate factory than the previous two years.

The Chocolate Factory: Erected in 1900, this factory at one moment provided employment for over 40 workers, the majority of them members of the community. As water power is falling out of use, the factory will be moved to Red Hook, and the structure will be demolished only two years after it was built.

The W. H. Baker Chocolate Factory, 1900 (Montgomery Place Orchards)

* Many of the structures in Cedar Hill are denoted by specified names of their original owners,

styles, and functions. The buildings marked with an asterisk are not referred to by a specific

name and are therefore designated by the name of the owner or tenant according to the 1870 and

1900 Federal and New York State Censuses.

** There is no visual record of this structure.

Cedar Hill, 1876 and *Cedar Hill, 1902* can be accessed through the following links—

https://skfb.ly/6JK6s and https://skfb.ly/6Jz9E —respectively.

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