



The following article may be use free of charge with no prior authorization provided that it is used for nonprofit purposes and appears with the author biography at the end of this article intact. Please [email us](mailto:) with any details of its use so that we can keep the author or other interested parties informed of the use of this article.

## Hudson River Day Line Steamers

*Connie Ruehle*

During the mid-1940s, Day Line steamers were always on time. Their arrival and departure was heralded with a loud whistle that was the signal for young boys to race the streets of Hudson to the dock.

Meeting the morning docking was out of the question until school was dismissed for the summer, but during the springtime the children wore swim trunks under their clothing and raced from school—about 8 long blocks in the city of Hudson—to “catch” the Day Line return trip. After school was let out, the divers would repeat this twice a day.

**Day Line Steamers**  
 “NEW YORK” and “ALBANY”  
 — OF THE —  
**HUDSON RIVER DAY LINE.**  
 ~~~~~  
 THE ATTRACTIVE ROUTE FOR SUMMER PLEASURE  
 TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE  
**CATSKILL MOUNTAINS,**  
*Saratoga and the Adirondaeks, Hotel*

*Champlain and the North, Niagara  
Falls and the West, The Thou-  
sand Islands and the St.  
Lawrence River.*



THE FAMOUS IRON STEAMERS "NEW YORK"  
AND "ALBANY" OF THE DAY LINE, ARE  
THE FASTEST EVER BUILT.

**They are unrivalled in point of elegance,** comfort and the quality of the service in every respect.

**They are constructed exclusively for summer tourist travel,** and carry no freight of any description beyond the personal baggage of the passengers.

**They have the lightness, grace and beauty of a yacht.**

**They are known the world over** as being the finest vessels of their class afloat.

**They have handsomely furnished restaurants,** open from 7.00 A. M., on the main deck, affording an uninterrupted view of the magnificent scenery for which the Hudson is renowned.

**They have fine orchestras,** and daintily appointed private parlors can be secured for the use of small parties or families.

**Every effort is made** by the management to perfect and maintain the service at the highest possible standard.

The title page of the 1903 Hudson River Day Line: List of Summer Tours and Catskill Mountain Resorts. By the time of this history, the ships on the river going all the way from the city to Albany included the Peter Stuyvesant, Robert Fulton, and Alexander Hamilton. While the names were different, the panache was the same.

Teenagers would race to the dock, shed their outer clothes, and jump from one piling to another for a good position to dive into the water for coins that the passengers would toss. Pennies were common, although there would be an occasional silver dollar. Sometimes a passenger would aim a larger coin to hit a youngster on the head. I'm told this really hurt!

Once in the water, the kids could only see about three feet, and they stored the coins in their mouths. When they were successful and could no longer close their mouths, they swallowed river water, though no one ever seemed to get sick.

Sometimes a diver would be adventurous and jump on board and run to the top deck. This was never met with approval and he would be promptly escorted off ship.

The timetable for the steamers coordinated with that of the railroads and buses of the area. The round-trip fare from New York City to Albany was \$3.50, but the steamers also served local traffic—a 30 mile excursion from Hudson to Kingston Point and back cost 50¢. We would take our brown bags and sit on a rock eating our lunch before the return trip. At Kingston Point, you could cross the Hudson to Athens for five cents.

The wife of a Mary Powell pilot sold their river-front house in Chelsea to a couple from Westchester. The new homeowners were delighted with the beautiful paneling, curved staircases, and more—until they found the attic packed with rotting cork crumbs that had been the ship's life preservers.



The Mary Powell traveling between the New York City and Poughkeepsie

There is a film that highlights these majestic steamers traveling the Hudson. The movie, *Dragonwyck*, appears infrequently on television and is a story of the Dutch patroons, starring Gene Tierney (my favorite) and Vincent Price. It will take you on a trip viewing the orchards (and more) along the Hudson highlands—truly a page from the past.

---

Connie Ruehle wants to thank Joseph Gambino, who was one of the divers, for his remembrances. The art is courtesy of the 1903 Hudson River Day Line: List of Summer Tours and Catskill Mountain Resorts.

High resolution [art](#).  
.pdf file    audio file

To use this article in your newsletter or as a handout, click into the article; select all; copy; and paste into a MSWord file.

Please remember to [let us know](#) of this use so that we can let the author or other interested parties know.

Copyright © 2009  
northerncatskillshistory.com  
[contact northerncatskillshistory.com](http://www.northerncatskillshistory.com)  
March 4, 2010

