

Signs of the times – William McKown; & the Patent of Jan Hendrickse Van Bael

presentation for the Guilderland Historical Society

16 November 2023 by Bill Kidd (authorship includes Susan Anderson)



No historical markers have existed in eastern Guilderland beyond the site of Tollgate No. 2

We thought that a marker for William McKown and his tavern, the first building in what later became McKownville, would be an appropriate addition

This marker is in manufacture and will be installed next year [Thank you to those who donated funds to pay for manufacture]



Proposal for new marker noting the First people;
the Dutch occupation;
the Pre-revolution land tenure and dispute;
and two prominent names of early pioneer families in the area that became Guilderland

Of the other markers in the Town only the Evert Bancker sign contains a date in the 17th C.

So who was Van Bael? and what land did he purchase?

Jan Hendrickse van Bael (bef. 1636? - 1681)

A tailor, and trader in Beverwyck (cloth, beavers, etc)

possibly here in 1653, certainly in 1657 (apprentices)

1658 buys house in Beverwyck (described a “burgher”)

1661-2 described as “trader here”

1664 April – appointed Commis (magistrate) in Fort Orange (a WIC appt)

serves to November 1666, through the English takeover

Frans Hals – Portrait of a Man
c. 1648-50

National Gallery Washington DC



Jan Hendrickse Van Bael nomination, and appointment as one of three Commis (magistrate) at Fort Orange, March and April 1664

15 115

Identifice Manlatten E. g. Aede
 Eenen den E. Direct. Dierl. E. g.
 van N. Nederland

Volgen D. E. g. Aede: ordonnantie
 tusschenwege genootend om een
 Commissarissen verduktelt getal
 te presenteren om die van
 Gede E. g. Aede: gelykheit te
 geven. By bij selectie van die
 in plaats van Jan van Bael
 Schermerhoorn, en Jan Comsterse

Jacob Schermerhoorn
 Leendert Janssen Barend
 Willem Jelle
 Jan Hendrickse Van Bael
 Jan Costerse Van Aken
 David Dittmerse Segnerde

Verzoeken de ordonnantie te
 By Blijven

Inde fortress Orange
 den 24^{de} Maart A^o 1664

D. E. g. Aede: ootmoed
 Dienaren der Commissarissen
 Commissarissen Goudsfort
 Orange en Dierl. Blyden
 La Monroene
 gelykheit
 Jan Aken Baecke
 Stoffel Jans

negromis. is geveest. De ordonnantie
 is overgevoert door de E. Commissarissen
 Commissarissen der fortress Orange. en
 Biedende, met gelykheit verduktelt. Dat
 D. g. Aede: in Raad van N. Nederland
 heeft de Commissarissen voor een
 jaar in plaats der g. Aede: de affgave
 Gede, geveest. In Raad. So dat de
 g. Aede: in Raad wegevoert tot Commissarissen
 voort geveest. Dierl. Blyden, gelykheit
 is geveest.

Jacob Schermerhoorn
 Jan Hendrickse Van Bael
 Jan Costerse Van Aken.

Artemis Loe Anstroomse N. Nederland
 Dierl. Blyden

Jacob Schermerhoorn
 Jan Hendrickse van Bael
 Jan Costerse Van Aken

Jan Hendrickse van Bael - continued

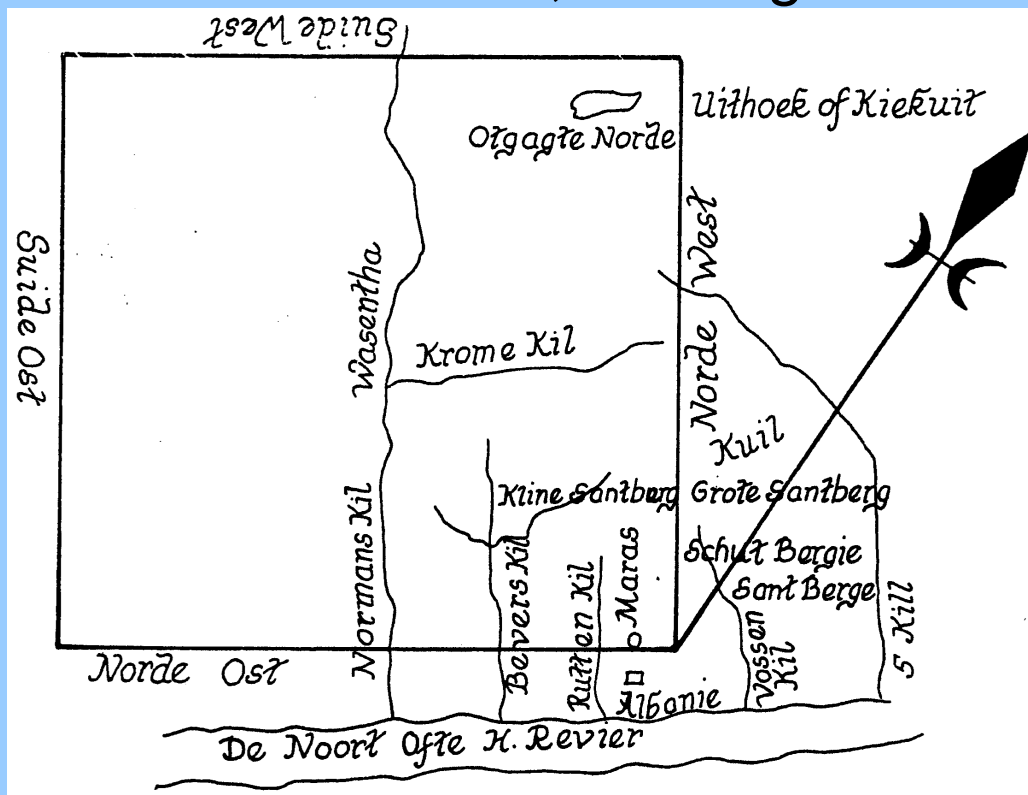
1666 or 1667 **marries** Helena (age 21), daughter of Willem Teller and recent widow of Cornelis Bogardus

1670 October – **appointed second term as Commis (magistrate)** in Albany; serves to 1672 November

1672 July 18 (old date) – **purchases patent from Mohawk chiefs** to land of the Normans Kill valley

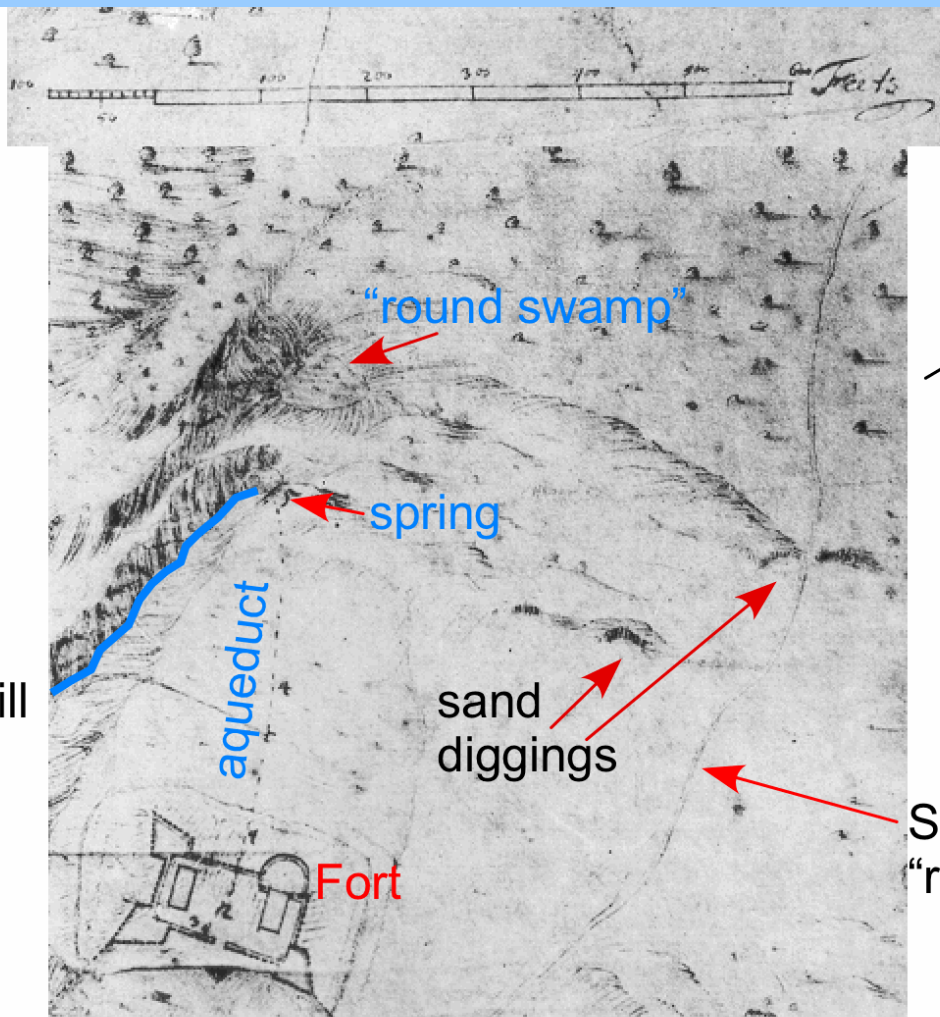
and just three weeks later, in Fort James (Manhattan)

1672 August 21 – **obtains confirmation of the patent** from Francis Lovelace, the English Governor-General



map included with the deed
from manuscript by Dennis Sullivan (2019)

“a certain parcel of low land, situated on both sides of the Normans Kill....as the same lies in its square, beginning at the Sant Berg, where the burghers of Schagnegtadie, alias, Albanie, daily haul their sand from....thence running north-westerly to and including the Otgagtenorde, alias the Uithoek....



1698 map of John Wolfgang Roemer
(extracts)

the description includes the statement that there is a round swamp 130 paces southwest of the Sant Berg from where the sand was hauled...this is identifiable at the appropriate distance on the excellent 1698 map of the military surveyor Roemer

his map also identifies a spring used as the fort water source; this like other springs in the area is at the location on the hillslope where the base of the Colonie Sand overlies the Albany Clay

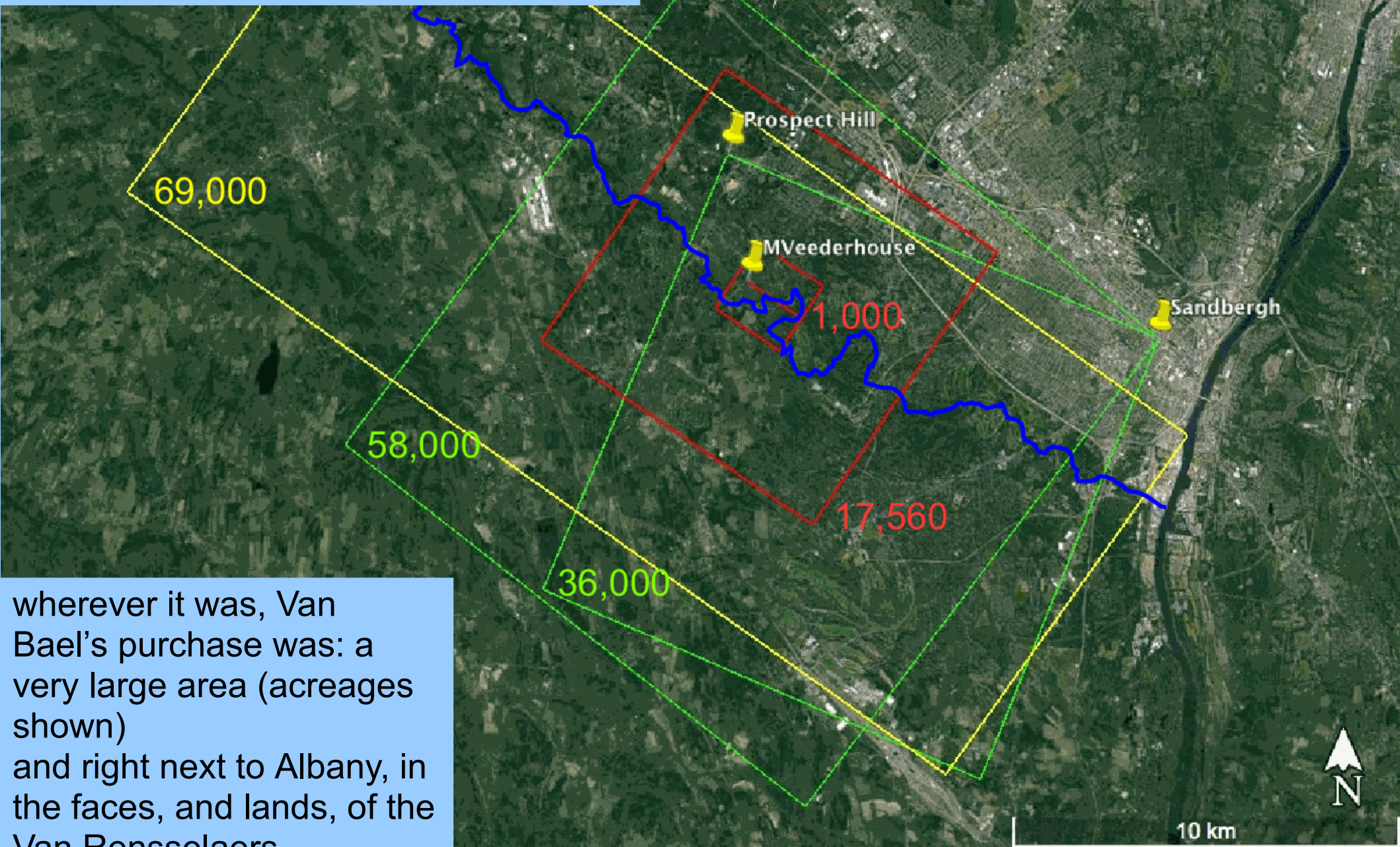
high resolution image here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nysmuseum/15603043669>

the full map in colour, but at lower resolution is here:

<https://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov//albany/im/imroemer.html>

where was the Uithoek?
Prospect Hill? - Dennis Sullivan (2019)
or one of the highest sand dunes near
the Mohawk Path? - our suggestions



wherever it was, Van
Bael's purchase was: a
very large area (acreages
shown)
and right next to Albany, in
the faces, and lands, of the
Van Rensselaers

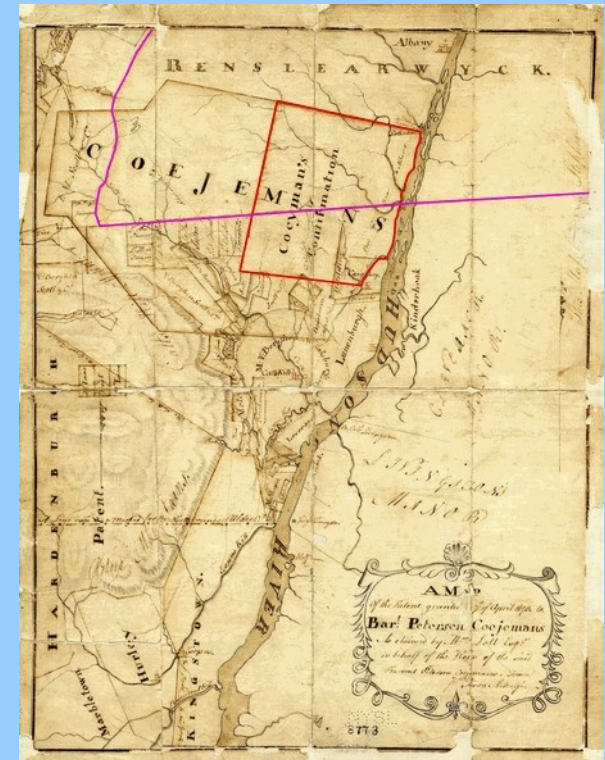
Van Bael was not the only interloper

Barent Pieterse Coeymans purchased, from Kattskill (Mahikan) sachems, a large area south of Albany extending from the west bank of the Hudson, which overlapped the van Rensselaer's claim. He got a patent from Francis Lovelace, the Governor-General, dated 7th April 1673; this starts out:

“Whereas Barent Piertersen by the Consent and Approbation of the Commissaryes at Albany hath made Purchase of the Princepall Sachems at the Kattskill and Proprietors of....”

As a speculation, I suggest the rumour mill in 1672-3 was promoting the notion that the van Rensselaers were not going to get their Colonie affirmed by the English, and now was the time to step in and grab a substantial bite.....

original map online here:
<http://purl.nysed.gov/nysl/70775193>



Jan Hendrickse van Bael - concluded

1674 December – buys a house in Albany, from Willem Teller, but through an intermediary?!

and **sells all but 4 morgens (8.4ac) of the patent** to Jan Albertse Bratt and Hendrick Willemse

1675 July 22 **gives power of attorney** to Jan Janse Bleeker and Jacob Sanderse Glen; sales of his lots and houses by them to 1678

1677 February 21 baptism record for daughter Helena, Westerkerk, **Amsterdam, Holland**

1680 June 05 baptism record for daughter Rachel (Raghel), Nieuwe Kerk, **Amsterdam, Holland**

1681 March 26 **burial record** for Jan Hendrickse van Bael, Westerkerk in **Amsterdam, Holland**

1682 August 15 – his widow Helena and children had recently arrived from Holland, landing in Manhattan

The Van Bael Patent – sale to Symon Veeder & Omie LaGrange

1683 June 26 Jan Bratt sold his half-share to Jacob Casperse, and that same day Jacob Casperse resold this half share to **Symon Volkertse (Veeder)**, for "a parcel of land at Shinnectady".

1685 March 16 Hendrick Willemse's half share of the Patent was sold by the administrators of his estate to Jan Casperse (Halenbeck)
1686 January 31 he sold it to Jan Hendrickse Vrooman for £48
1686 September 28 Jan Vrooman sold it to **Omie LaGrange**, for 100 beaver skins.

and

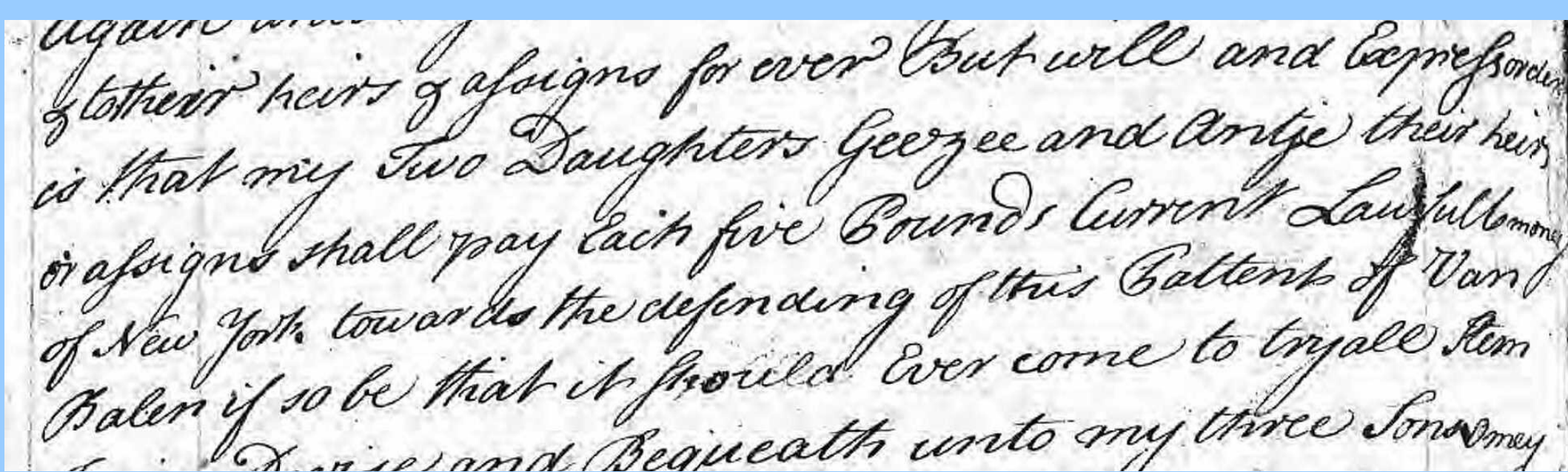
1716 September 6 the remainder of the Patent was sold by the surviving heirs of Jan van Bael (his four daughters) for £250 to **Omie LaGrange** and **Johannes Simonse Vedder (or Veeder)**
- the son of Symon Volkertse

The Patent disputed by the van Rensselaer Patroons

Veeder and LaGrange descendants retained ownership and farmed the properties for ~90 years, but under legal attack by the Van Rensselaers much of this time, **disputing the validity of the Patent**

will of Isaac LaGrange 1761

“.. will and express order is that my two daughters Geezee and Antjie ... shall pay each five pounds current lawful money of New York towards the **defending of this Pattent of Van Balen** if so be that it **should ever come to tryall....**



A snippet of a handwritten manuscript in cursive script, likely a will. The text is written on aged, slightly stained paper. The visible portion of the text reads: '... of their heirs & assigns for ever But will and Express order is that my Two Daughters Geezee and Antjie their heirs or assigns shall pay each five Pounds current Lawfull money of New York towards the defending of this Pattent of Van Balen if so be that it should ever come to tryall Item I do give and Bequeath unto my three Sons my'. The handwriting is fluid and characteristic of the 18th century.

The Van Bael Patent – the arbitration 1774-6

1774 - The Veeder and LaGrange descendants* agreed with the Van Rensselaer Manor to an **arbitration by three or more supposedly disinterested referees**, under an intimidatingly large bond - £50,000!

1775 April – the arbitration agreement was passed as a law by the Colonial Assembly

The referees met in May 1775, and their **decision was that the Patent consisted merely of 1000 acres** (a square of sides 1.25 miles), located across the Normanskill where Johnston Road now runs to it.

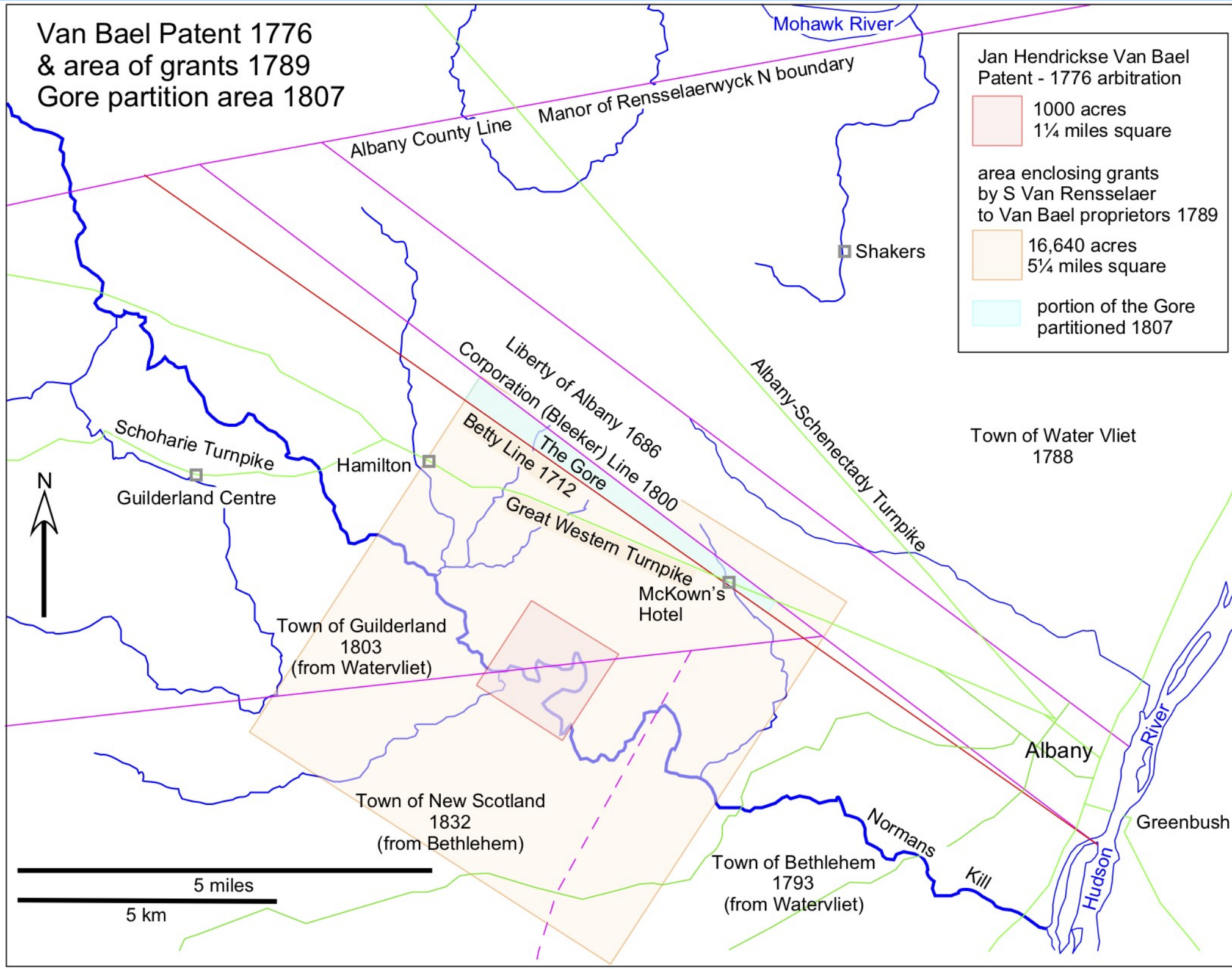
Rev. James McClure wrote that 63 families were dispossessed by this decision, and also that claims of bribery of the referees were made.

The decision was supposed to be confirmed by an act of the Colonial Assembly, and to be ratified by the King (then George 3); given the events of 1776 and after, this was never to happen!

* 10 LaGranges in 3 families; 4 Veeders in 2 families

[<https://mckownville.org/historypages/MIA-NormanskillPeople.html>]

Van Bael Patent 1776
& area of grants 1789
Gore partition area 1807



The Van Bael Patent – the grant to the Patent proprietors 1789

The lawsuit and arbitration were driven by the widow Catherine van Rensselaer, and Philip Livingston (her father) and Abraham Ten Broeck (uncle-in-law), also co-administrators of the Manor until the minor Stephen van Rensselaer III reached age 21 and succeeded to the Patroonship in 1785.

1789 February 8 this young man signed a deed “**for the final and amicable settlement of the said controversy**” that granted significantly more land in a larger area, a square 5.25 miles on a side, to the Veeder and LaGrange claimants, in specified proportions.

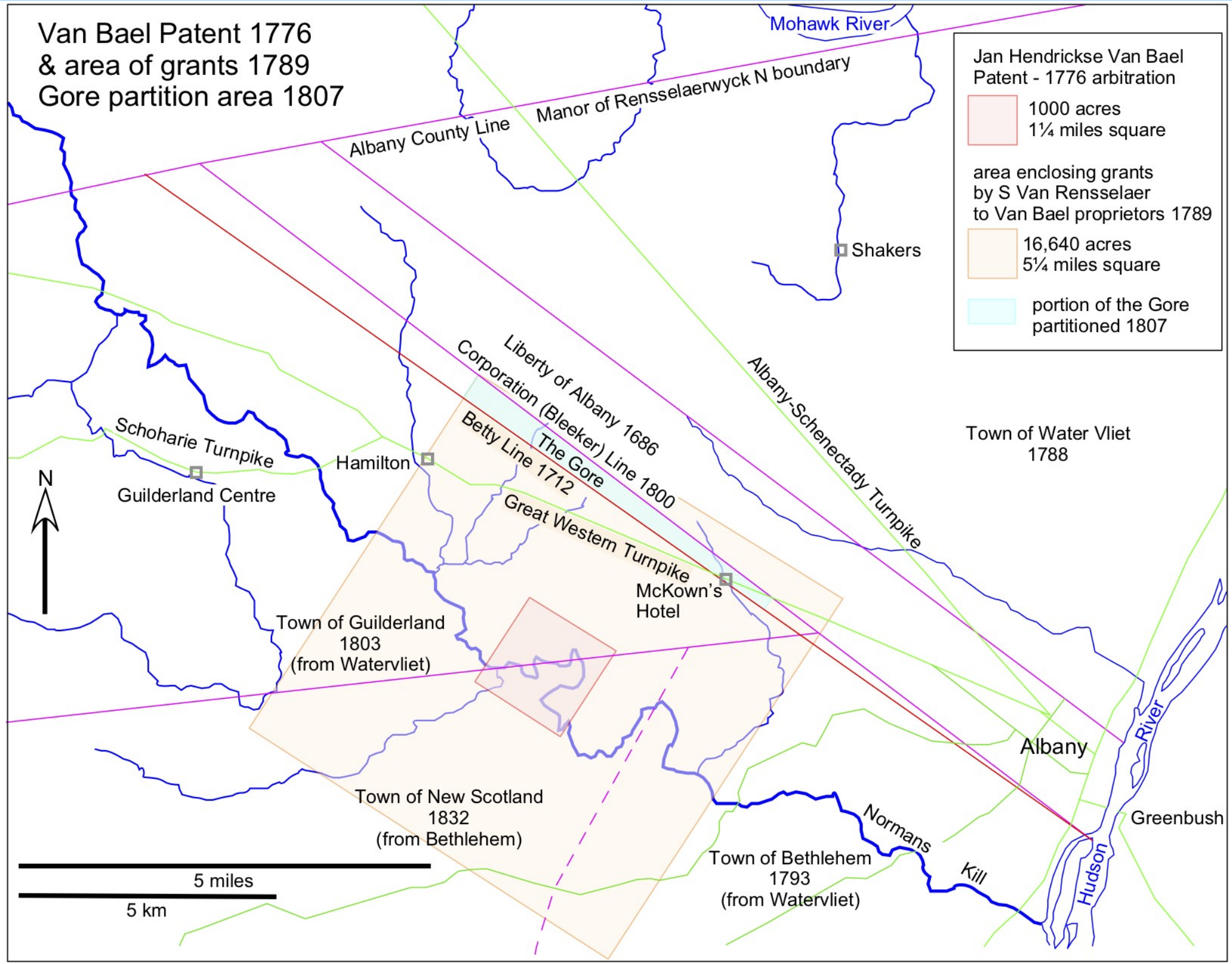
Albany County book 17, p 376-381

[sandwiched among deeds involving William McKown]

1796 January 16 – the Veeder and LaGrange grantees sign deeds **dividing up the awarded properties**, totalling 4,130 acres (out of a possible 16,640ac)

Albany County book 17, p 450-3; and 453-7

Van Bael Patent 1776
& area of grants 1789
Gore partition area 1807

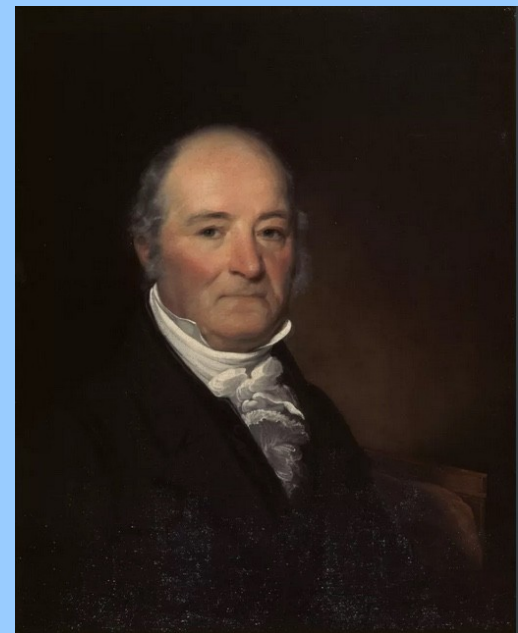


The Van Bael Patent – William McKown picks up some pieces

Here's where our interest started – William McKown purchased from 1797 to 1801 from some of the Veeder and LaGrange claimants (or grantees) land which eventually amounted to a significant acreage, both on the Normanskill in the arbitrated Patent, and from there northeastward to the site of his new inn, tavern, etc. in the larger grant area. (perhaps ~1000ac)

Because of these purchases, McKown also was **allocated in 1807 three substantial parcels in “The Gore”**; the property released by the City of Albany in 1800 when the southwestern boundary of the Liberty of Albany was moved, based on a resurvey by Simeon DeWitt and Evert van Alen

Simeon DeWitt
by Henry Inman –1822
Albany Institute of History & Art





Proposal for new marker noting
the First people;
the Dutch occupation;
the Pre-revolution land tenure
and dispute;
and two prominent names of
early pioneer families in the
area that became Guilderland

This is a draft, a suggestion -
Your opinions invited:
whether this should be done?
if so,
on the content and wording
and

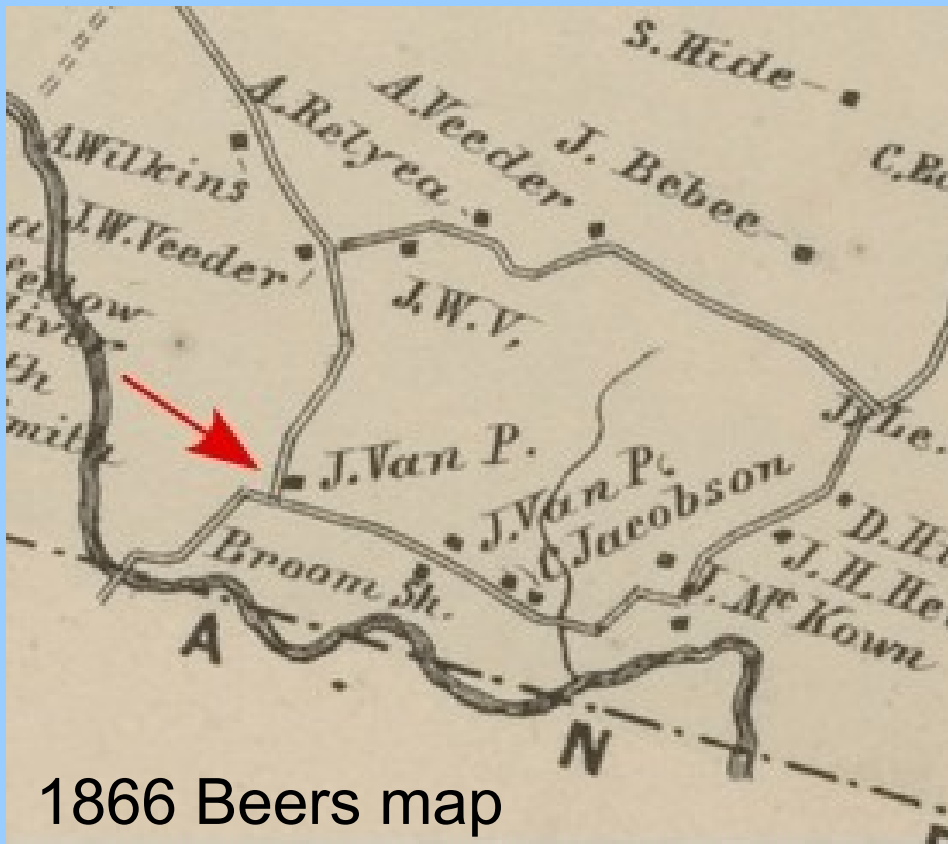
whether a grant application to the Pomeroy Foundation be made?
if not, or declined, should the Society try to raise the funds by appeal?

and we hope the New Scotland and Voorheesville Historical Societies
might accept an invitation to co-sponsor this?



The location – the arbitrated patent is defined beginning with a measurement “from the southeast corner of the house formerly owned by Myndert Veeder...” – in 1866 (Beers map) owned by J Van Patten who bought it in 1864 from the gt-grandson of Myndert Veeder.

We suggest the marker be placed near here.



1866 Beers map



1851 Sidney map

the 1851 Sidney map shows I Schermerhorn (not traceable in the deeds, probably renting)



More extended explanations and links to sources are available at the McKownville Improvement Association website (history section pages)
<https://mckownville.org/MIAhistory.html>

Acknowledgements

Thanks to:

Mary Ellen Johnson, Town Historian

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Albany County Hall of Records staff

Librarians at the Albany Institute of History & Art

online resources including

[ancestry.com *subscription*]

[<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/>]

[<https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/>]

Stefan Bielinski [<https://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov//albany/pcalhindex.html>]

Albany Institute of History & Art [<https://www.albanyinstitute.org/>]

New York State Archives [<https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/>]

NY Public Library [<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/lane/maps-atlases>]

Internet Archive [<https://archive.org/details/texts>]