

## More About Benjamin Palmer's Involvement With Raising Funds for a Free Bridge from Manhattan

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Benjamin Palmer was the son-in-law of Thomas Pell, Third Lord of the Manor of Pelham. In 1761, Benjamin Palmer purchased from his brother, Joseph, the island then known as Minefor's Island (known today as City Island, long a part of the Town of Pelham before its annexation by New York City). Benjamin Palmer had grand plans to build a large port City on the island intended to rival New York City as an international shipping hub.

On Tuesday, May 2, 2006, I published to the Historic Pelham Blog a posting entitled "[Benjamin Palmer's Advertisement in 1756 To Raise Subscriptions To Fund a Free Bridge From Manhattan](#)". In it I described Palmer's involvement in efforts to break the monopoly, so to speak, of the only bridge from Manhattan to the mainland -- the toll bridge known as King's Bridge. To this end, in 1756 he began efforts to raise the funds necessary to build a free bridge from Manhattan. Today's Historic Pelham Blog posting provides more information about Palmer's involvement, based on a fascinating advertisement that appeared in at least two issues of *The New-York Journal, Or General Advertiser* in 1767. The text of those advertisements appears immediately below.

*"IT is hoped that the Gentlemen who were pleased to sign the Recommendation to the following Petition, and which was therewith presented to the last General Assembly of this Province, will excuse the Publication of their Names, as we have no other Means to clear ourselves of a Scandalous Accusation, which we are informed by Benjamin Fowler, Esq., is brought against us by Col. Frederick Philips, of having the Names of three Gentlemen who never subscribed to said Recommendation, Viz. Doct. Robert Graham, Mrs. Stephen Ward, and the Said Benjamin Fowler, Esq.; one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, inserted in the List of Subscribers to the same, which, if so, must have been forged while in our Custody.*

*As the Inhabitants of this Colony in general, and many others, have received great Benefit by the Erection of the Free-Bridge, which we undertook at first with as great a Regard to the public Good at our own private Advantage, and as we have hitherto, not only received no Reward for this Service, but have done it at the expense of a very large Sum of our own Property, which we have lain out of many Years, it cannot but be thought extremely hard that it should also bring upon our Characters so cruel and injurious an Aspersion - and we hope that high Regard which every honest Man ought to have for his Character, will sufficiently justify as for taking this Method to clear ours, from so scandalous an Imputation.*

*JACOB DEYCKMAN, Junr.*

*JOHN VERMILIE.*

To the Honourable the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, for the Province of New-York.

The PETITION of JACOB DYCKMAN, BENJAMIN PALMER, and JOHN VERMILIE; HUMBLY SHEWETH,

THAT your Petitioners have with great Pains and Labour, erected a Bridge over Harlem River, a little to the Southward of a Place called and known by the Name of *King's-Bridge*, and that the said Bridge has been, and is now of great Benefit and Utility to the Public; and that for want of proper Support and Assistance, it is likely soon to come to Decay, and the Public again reduced to the Necessity of paying to the Toll-Bridge as formerly : And also that your Petitioners having expended upwards of One Thousand Pounds in erecting and repairing the same, have received no more than Two Hundred and Eighty Pounds for that Purpose; so that your Petitioners are in Arrearage upwards of

Seven Hundred Pounds, as will appear by the Accounts now in the Possession of the House, attested before the Mayor of the City of New-York : Therefore your Petitioners humbly pray, that the Honourable House would take the Matter of their Petition in Consideration, and grant them such Relief in the Premises, as they in their great Wisdom shall think fit, and your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

The above Petition was presented to the General Assembly with a Recommendation, signifying the Truth of the Facts therein mentioned, the great public Benefit of the said Bridge, the Reasonableness of the Petition, &c and praying that the Petitioners should be allowed such Compensation, Relief and Assistance, as the General Assembly in their Wisdom should think proper. This Recommendation, was subscribed by the following Inhabitants and Gentlemen, and no others, viz.

The underwritten are the Gentlemen's Names of New-York.

James Delancey Richard Van Dyck Philip Brasher  
Thomas Jones Jasper Drake John Stitite  
John V. D. Speigel Joseph Jadwin Peter Vandervoort  
Henry Cruger John Ray Petrus Byvanck  
Sidney Breese Peter Clopper James Bown, junr  
Peter Remsen Joseph Scott James Sutton  
Elias Desbrosses William Kirby Abraham Sebring  
Robert Murray Cors. Wortendick William Depeyster  
Paul Scanck Thomas Tucker Isaac Rosevelt  
Jacob Walton Garret Rapalje John Depeyster  
Peter V.B. Livingston Henry Franklin Benjamin Stout  
James M'Evers Abel Hardinbrook Gerard Depeyster  
Andrew M'Myer Samuel Johnson James Van Horne  
Ger. Wm. Beekman Abrm. Van Vleck Chisr. Roosevelt  
Ger. Duyckinck Nicholas Bogert Jesse Hunt  
Theos. Van Wyck P. T. Curtenius. Alexander Whyte  
Garrit Abeel John Child Joseph Drake  
James Abeel Caspar Wistar Comfort Sands  
Uriah Hendricks James Gordon Joshua Hutchings  
Abraham Cock Amos Dodge James Bennit  
Wm. Bancker Thomas Williams John Moore  
Joseph Dewight Benjamin Burling Jacob Townsend  
Joseph Robinson Patt Macknifs Samuel Underhill  
James Datzel [?] Hugh Ryder Jonas Platt  
John Stout William Nicoll Silvanus Dillingham  
Caleb Hyatt Benjamin Underhill Anthony Shoemaker  
Isaac Sears Amos Underhill Joshua Bloomer  
Isaac Corfa Jacob Watson James Franklin  
Joseph Bull Samuel Franklin John Dunscomb  
Wm. Hardenbrook Thomas Franklin  
John Franklin James Green

The underwritten are the Gentlemen's Names of West-Chester County.

Lewis Morris Thomas Butler Jacobus Bleecker  
James Graham John Fowler Philip Pell  
Cornelius Willit Barnard Rynlander Thomas Pinkney  
John Ferguson Isaac Guyon Abraham Guion

Robert Hunt junr. George Cornwelijun Daniel Barker  
John Legget Abraham Legget William Griffin  
Isaac Legget John Townsend Edward Merrit  
Gabriel Legget James Horton Joseph Purdy  
John Hedger Benjamin Griffin Joseph Hains  
John Emary Jonathan Purdy Gerard Bloomer  
David Hunt Benjamin Palmer Benjamin Brown  
Aaron Hunt Gilbert Budd Abraham Canfield  
Isaac Willit Lewis Maruen Ebenezer Kniffin  
Stephen Hunt Thomas Forman Joseph Theall  
Elvin Hunt Daniel Miller Daniel Thang  
Isaac Wilkins junr Isaac Anderson Timothy Witmore  
John Oakley John Doughty Joshua Purdy  
Nath. Underhill Ebenezer Haviland William Sutton  
William Betts Jonathan Brown Ephraim Avery  
John Ferris David Brown Samuel Tredwell  
Edward Stevenson Jonath. Brown jun Isaiah Maynard  
Aaron Quinby Jonathan Wright Chrstr. Eisenhart  
Israel Honeywell James Haviland Benjamin Ferris  
Theophilus Bartow Jeremiah Fowler Moses Owen  
Walter Brigs Isaac Oakley Caleb Ferris  
Charles Vincent jun. Caleb Griffin Ebenezer Burling  
John Williams junr Israel Oakley Samuel Sueden  
John Williams Gabriel Lynch Thomas Farrington  
Isaac Williams Gilbert Ferris Jonathan Griffin  
Isaac Valentine John Townsend Jonathan Griffin  
Jonathan Fowler Moses Drake (Tompkins  
Lewis Guyon Benjamin Drake James Verryan

The underwritten are the Gentlemen's Names of Harlem.

John Nagal John Dyckman John Myer  
Jacob Nagal John Sickels Pexell Fowler  
William Nagal John Sickels Hendrick V. Bramer  
William Dyckman Arent Buffin [?] Garrett Striker  
John Oblenes Cornelius Sickles Jacob Dyckman  
Abraham Buffin [?] John Roomer Peter Myers  
Henry Oblenes Abraham Myer Adolphus Myer  
Arent Myer Lawrence Myers John Bessonet  
John Myer junr. Abraham Meyers jun. St. George Talbot"

Source: [Untitled] IT is hoped . . . , *The New-York Journal, Or General Advertiser* , Mar. 5, 1767, p. 3 (The same advertisement also appeared in the March 12, 1767 issue of the same newspaper, p. 1).

For a related advertisement, see To the consideration of the Public, *The New-York Journal, Or General Advertiser* , Feb. 26, 1767, p. 3.

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